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ThreeSixty

Minnesota Teens Report Stories & Issues That Matter

Healthy Living for All

Page 8



ThreeSixty Focus on...

Gov. Mark Dayton

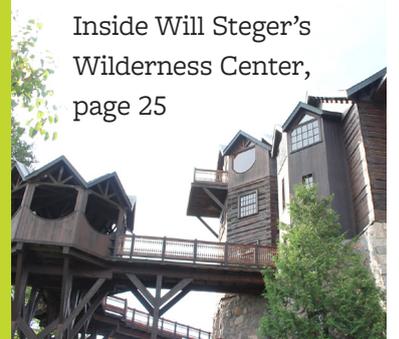
The Minnesota native talks high school, politics, and diversity and inclusion efforts. Page 22

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Powerful college essays, page 15

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Inside Will Steger's Wilderness Center, page 25



REAL STUDENTS. REAL STORIES.

ThreeSixty

VOLUME 8 • ISSUE 1

JOURNALISM

Contributors in this issue: Magda Abdi, Hiawatha Collegiate High School • Heaven Aschalew, St. Paul Harding High School • Erick Castellanos, Minneapolis Roosevelt High School • Abdulmalik Daud, St. Paul Harding High School • Jose Galvan Castro, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School • Pan Han, Roseville Area High School • Gabriel Hearne, Columbia Heights High School • Dang Her, St. Paul Johnson High School • Autumn McKinney, Minnetonka High School • Asia Mohamed, St. Paul Harding High School • Safiya Mohamed, St. Paul Central High School • Samira Mohamed, St. Paul Harding High School • Pasaya Moua, St. Paul Harding High School • Amina Muumin, St. Paul Harding High School • Anne Omer, Andover High School • Jose Popoca Palmas, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School • Pay Poe, Roseville Area High School • Sharee Roman, St. Paul Academy and Summit School • Heidi Sanchez Avila, Hiawatha Collegiate High School • Chia Thao, St. Paul Highland Park High School • Janet Valdez, Minneapolis Roosevelt High School • Mariah Watley, Sage Academy • Zong Xiong, Champlin Park High School

Special-use photos: Office of Gov. Mark Dayton • Bob Dixon • Ajith George • BrightSide Produce • Roots for the Home Team • University of St. Thomas • Appetite for Change • MPR News • Maria Alejandra Cardona, MPR News • Levi Ismail



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Progress worth celebrating

I TUCK MYSELF into a chair in the middle of Minnesota Public Radio's spacious UBS Forum.

Sitting to my left are nine advanced ThreeSixty Journalism students and young alums. As advanced students, they had spent the previous four days producing radio broadcast stories at Minnesota Public Radio with the help of newsroom staff. This was their celebration.

Several dozen people—MPR staff, ThreeSixty board members, parents—file in and find seats. The students' faces beam as some well-known MPR personalities introduce each story, one by one, before it plays over the UBS Forum's sound system.

Sitting behind me is a group of 15 Twin Cities high school students. As ThreeSixty's newest students, they spent the past three weeks with me at the University of St. Thomas, where I encouraged them to become storytellers and helped them practice the fundamentals of journalism.

They, like their peers, were celebrating on this day—that they had recently completed reported stories that would be published



Miles Trump
ThreeSixty
Journalism
Program Manager

in the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press in early September, as well as in this magazine. At this point in the afternoon, though, they listen intently to their advanced peers' stories, gaining a glimpse of the opportunities that await them as they progress through ThreeSixty.

Exactly one week earlier, sitting in the Anderson Student Center at St. Thomas was a group of 10 advanced ThreeSixty students and young alums—many of the same students who attended the radio camp. They were celebrating, too.

They'd spent the week reporting on health equity in the Twin Cities and produced five video broadcast pieces, which they were showing to an audience. All of those stories were published on WCCO-TV's website, and all of them will be published on the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention's online channels.

At the beginning of summer 2017, we at ThreeSixty knew

we were embarking on new terrain by adding an all-new TV broadcast camp, in partnership with the Center for Prevention, Padilla and WCCO-TV, and an all-new radio broadcast camp, in partnership with MPR (see page 4). By the end of summer 2017, we knew that these camps were a success, and that they provided a foundation on which we could continue building.

These new camps give students opportunities above and beyond ThreeSixty's traditional offerings. They also allow ThreeSixty, which has traditionally been print-focused, to provide deep, impactful camp experiences in the three main journalistic media: print, TV and radio.

As I sat on the chair in the UBS Forum, listening to our students' radio stories, reflecting on our students' TV stories and thinking about our students' newspaper stories, I couldn't help but be struck by the progress ThreeSixty continues to make in serving the next generation of journalists and storytellers.

That's progress worth celebrating.

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NEW CAMPS This summer, ThreeSixty offered a new TV Broadcast Camp, in partnership with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention, Padilla and WCCO-TV, and a new Radio Broadcast Camp, in partnership with Minnesota Public Radio. **Page 4**

BLOGOSPHERE Each day in summer camp, ThreeSixty high school students blog about their camp experiences. Read snippets of their blogs. **Page 6**

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT 2008 ThreeSixty Scholar and TV journalist Levi Ismail's dream is to one day report the news on TV in front of his mother. **Page 7**



HEALTH EQUITY GAP In partnership with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention, ThreeSixty high school students tell stories about people, groups and organizations aiming to improve health equity in the Twin Cities. **Page 8-14**

COLLEGE ESSAYS The magic of College Essay Boot Camp continues, as ThreeSixty students share their compelling personal stories. **Page 15-21**

THREESIXTY FOCUS ON... GOV. MARK DAYTON 2017 ThreeSixty Scholar Samantha HoangLong sits down with Minnesota's 40th governor for an extensive Q-and-A. **Page 22**

NEW TWO-YEAR COLLEGE The Dougherty Family College, open this fall, aims to help low-income students succeed in college. **Page 24**

WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE Polar explorer Will Steger's Wilderness Center fosters community and hope for the future of climate change. **Page 25**

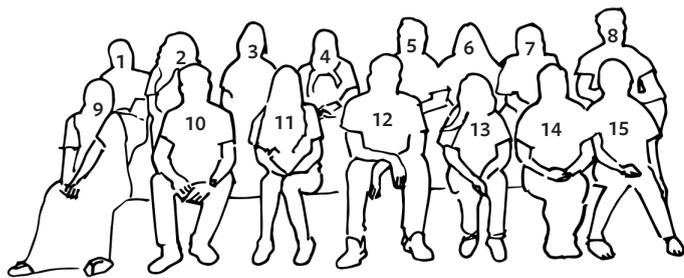
Summer at ThreeSixty Journalism

CAMP AT A GLANCE

- 110 student participants from 19 high schools across seven summer camp sessions
- 186 volunteer roles fulfilled by individuals from more than 50 organizations
- 36 college essays written
- 20 student bylines for newspaper and magazine stories
- 9 radio stories produced by students
- 5 video stories produced by students
- \$100,000+ in scholarships given to eligible students to attend ThreeSixty camp



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS



Above: Students in ThreeSixty Journalism's June Rookie Journalist Camp pose for a photo at the University of St. Thomas. 1. Bahju Salat, 2. Stephanie Tapia-Ponce, 3. Paqazi Xiong, 4. Amina Muumin, 5. Zong Xiong, 6. Mai Lee Xiong, 7. Keleenah Yang, 8. Jorge Sánchez, 9. Samira Mohamed, 10. Jose Galvan, 11. Selena Souvannasane, 12. Jose Popoca Palmas, 13. Nhan Luong, 14. Kyra Thor, 15. Chia Thao. Missing from photo: Bethlehem Tewodros, Dylan Vang and Ratsamee Thosaengsiri.

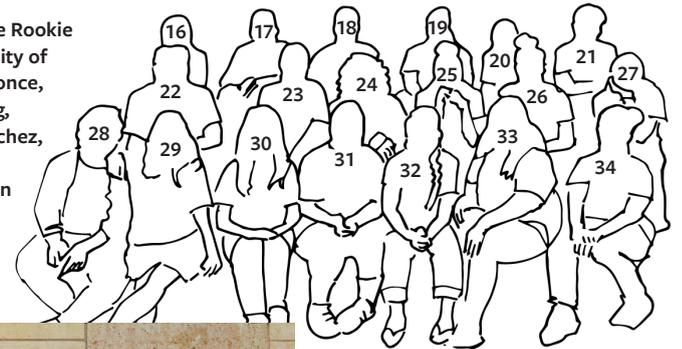


PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Left: Students in ThreeSixty Journalism's July Rookie Journalist Camp pose for a photo at the University of St. Thomas. 16. Magda Abdi, 17. Abdulmalik Daud, 18. Nasrudin Ahmed, 19. Janet Valdez, 20. Asia Mohamed, 21. Dang Her, 22. Erick Castellanos, 23. Pasaya Moua, 24. Mariah Watley, 25. Gabriel Hearne, 26. Heaven Aschalew, 27. Safiya Mohamed, 28. Heidi Sanchez Avila, 29. Sharee Roman, 30. Shimin Zhang, 31. Ba Po, 32. Pay Poe, 33. Pan Han, 34. Belainesh Admas. Missing from photo: Anne Omer, Autumn McKinney and Isaiah Jackson.

Young journalists take the next step

ThreeSixty Journalism's brand new TV and radio summer camps give budding storytellers new skills

THIS SUMMER, THREESIXTY Journalism debuted two brand new camps—a TV broadcast camp and a radio broadcast camp—for advanced ThreeSixty students and young alums.

In the TV Broadcast Camp that was held from July 17-21, students created short “look-live” videos that covered health equity in the Twin Cities. The TV Broadcast Camp was a new collaboration with Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention, public relations firm Padilla and WCCO-TV.

The Radio Broadcast Camp took place on July 24-28 at the Minnesota Public Radio headquarters in downtown St. Paul. Nine advanced ThreeSixty students and young alums were guided by MPR News staff throughout the week to create two-minute “superspot” radio stories on a St. Paul Saints gameday at CHS Field.

“The TV and radio camps are a great addition to the programs ThreeSixty Journalism offers,” said Bao Vang, ThreeSixty Journalism engagement coordinator. “These are natural next tracks for our advanced students who have completed previous ThreeSixty camps, which have a print focus.”

I was among the 10 advanced ThreeSixty students and young alums who attended the five-day TV Broadcast Camp on the University of St. Thomas campus.

Students learned the essentials of broadcast TV—script writing, on-camera interviewing, broadcast voice, on-screen presence and smartphone videography. By the end of the week, students created 2-to-3-minute livenesshots of stories revolving around the topic of health equity. These stories were posted on



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty Journalism intern

WCCO-TV media platforms.

Amari Graham, a ThreeSixty student and incoming freshman at the University of Minnesota Duluth, and I reported on a St. Paul-based organization called Roots for the Home Team. During our 3-minute



Advanced ThreeSixty Journalism students and young alums report stories and interview sources during ThreeSixty's new radio and TV camps in July. The TV Broadcast Camp was held in partnership with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention, Padilla and WCCO-TV. The Radio Broadcast Camp was held in partnership with Minnesota Public Radio.

PHOTOS BY MPR NEWS, MARIA ALEJANDRA CARDONA, MPR NEWS, AND THREESIXTY STAFF



TV BROADCAST CAMP

Zahra Mustafa and Katelyn Vue
with mentor Bao Vang
(ThreeSixty)
Story: The Good Acre

Loveisajoy Pha and Zekriah Chaudhry
with mentors Chad Caruthers
(ThreeSixty) and Katie Priebe
(Padilla)
Story: BrightSide Produce

Talia Bradley and Erianna Jiles
with mentors Nina Moini
(WCCO-TV) and Dymanh
Chhoun (WCCO-TV)
Story: Methanol tobacco
ordinance

Kayla Song and Genesis Buckhalton
with mentors Ken Stone
(U of M professor) and
Hey Man Productions
Story: Gandhi Mahal
Interfaith Garden

Samantha HoangLong
and Amari Graham
with mentors Kris Patrow
(Padilla) and Jasper Farlow
(Padilla video intern)
Story: Roots for the
Home Team



RADIO BROADCAST CAMP

Kayla Song
with mentor Annie Baxter
(reporter at Marketplace)
Story: St. Paul Saints usher

Samantha HoangLong
with mentor Jeyca
Maldonado-Medina
(MPR Newsroom intern)
Story: St. Paul Saints
play-by-play announcer

Talia Bradley with
mentor Jonathan Blakley
(MPR news program director)
Story: Saints player

Amari Graham
with mentor Meg Martin (MPR
managing editor, enterprise)
Story: Saints suite host

Loveisajoy Pha
with mentor Laura Yuen
(MPR correspondent and editor
for new audiences)
Story: Saints field crew

Jose Galvan with mentor
Euan Kerr (MPR arts reporter)
Story: Saints pig and
pig handler

Marissa Abara
with mentor Solvejg Wastvedt
(MPR education reporter)
Story: Saints merchandise vendor

Zekriah Chaudhry
with mentor Laura McCallum
(MPR managing editor
for daily news)
Story: Saints manager

Simone Cazares
with mentor Riham Feshir
(MPR reporter)
Story: Saints emcee

liveshot, we spoke with executive director Sue Moores and student participant Tony about how young people are growing vegetables, making salad recipes and selling those salads at Target Field during Minnesota Twins games. It was a new form of reporting for us, and we had the help of mentors from Padilla.

Katelyn Vue, a senior at North High School in St. Paul, and Zahra Mustafa, a junior at Eagan High School, reported about The Good Acre, a nonprofit commercial kitchen that helps food makers connect with their community.

“The TV camp was way more challenging compared to other camps,” Vue said, “because it pushed me to be more flexible and creative while learning the new pieces of making a TV story.”

After spending a week learning about TV broadcasting, five of those same students and I continued growing our knowledge at Minnesota Public Radio headquarters the following week. Three more advanced students joined us.

The Radio Broadcast Camp was instructed by experienced newsroom professionals from MPR News. In five days, students learned what makes radio different and how to interview, write and read for radio.

The radio camp was held in memory of Toni Randolph, who passed away in July 2016. Randolph was the MPR News editor for new audiences and a longtime supporter of ThreeSixty Journalism. She sat on ThreeSixty’s Board of Advisors and won its 2014 Widening the Circle Award, which recognizes an

individual’s extraordinary contributions to the next generation of journalists, particularly while promoting inclusion and diversity.

In January, MPR News and ThreeSixty set out to establish a sustainable and purposeful project to honor Randolph’s memory. MPR newsroom staff raised more than \$11,000 for the camp from coworkers, colleagues and friends. Those funds were matched by MPR, and the ThreeSixty/MPR Radio Broadcast Camp was born.

Students went to CHS Field, where the St. Paul Saints play, to interview sources and collect audio for their reports on food vendors, merchandise vendors, an usher, a team manager, a player and even the team pig, named “Alternative Fats.”

Radio camp attendee Zekriah Chaudhry, a senior at Minneapolis

South High School, reported on the St. Paul Saints team manager, George Tsamis.

Like many of the other students, Chaudhry valued learning from MPR News reporters during the week.

“Getting to know experts in radio journalism and how they do their job was a rare experience that I don’t take for granted,” he said.

At the end of the week, a reception was held in MPR’s UBS Forum, where camp participants, parents, MPR staff, ThreeSixty board members and staff, and others gathered to hear the nine two-minute radio stories and eat ice cream.

“It’s terrific to see excited young journalists take ownership of these projects, hit the field with focus and deliver a high-quality final project,” said ThreeSixty Executive Director

Chad Caruthers. “The result for students? Sparks of interest, newfound abilities and mentors, and a broader appreciation for the storytelling craft.”

The two camps also caught the attention of several media organizations, including WCCO-TV, CCX Media, the Maple Grove Press and the Sun Sailor, all of which produced stories on ThreeSixty.

It was an exciting two weeks for ThreeSixty, its students, partners and volunteers.

“The unique hands-on learning experience was amazing,” said Talia Bradley, a senior at Minneapolis Roosevelt High School, “and I learned so much, from writing radio and TV scripts to your TV presence and radio voice. I loved camp and can’t wait to continue my career in journalism!”

The Blogosphere

Each day, students at ThreeSixty Journalism camp blogged about their summer experience. Here's what they wrote.



Ultimately, ThreeSixty Journalism has been a rewarding camp. It has helped my college essay evolve into a piece of artwork. It has helped me make wonderful connections with many great people. Though journalism has not been on my radar for a career, ThreeSixty has given me an interest in the field.

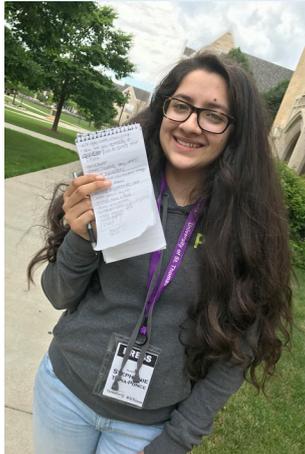
—Zong Xiong, Champlin Park High School

I got the chance to really see myself as a future broadcaster. Meeting people from the industry and being allowed a space to be myself and tell a story was the best feeling ever. I'm happy that I can tell stories and make it count for people my age.

—Erianna Jiles, St. Paul College

I first nervously entered the St. Thomas campus at 8:40 a.m. on June 19, the first day of a two-week camp dedicated to journalism and writing. It is now 4:43 p.m. While I've only spent a single day, barely six hours, at ThreeSixty Journalism, I can already tell that I won't regret this experience.

—Chia Thao, St. Paul Highland Park High School



I had seen professionals do live shoots in studio. However, I had never been able to practice what it is like to be a broadcaster. This is more important than I ever would have thought since the skill set needed to be a broadcaster is completely different from what is required to be a print journalist. Additionally, all of us participating in the (TV Broadcast) camp were able to tell amazing stories about organizations striving to close the health equity gap.

—Zekiah Chaudhry, Minneapolis South High School

I have enjoyed my time in ThreeSixty. I feel like everything went really fast and it's surprising how far we've gone in only three weeks. We went from barely talking to others, to making strong relationships. We went from not really asking questions, to inquiring about everything. I will miss doing this because it was so fun.

—Magda Abdi, Hiawatha Collegiate High School

Before the camp, I anticipated a boring program filled with generic writing prompts and information I already had. Although, ThreeSixty proved me wrong. I met energetic mentors well versed in writing who challenged me to do better. We play games and got to know the peers around us. It is not just a program that is there to help us write.

It is there to help us grow and change as people, connect with our peers and expand our experiences while pushing us out of our comfort zones.

—Keleenah Yang, St. Paul Como Park High School

My college essay writing has changed from day one. With the help of pros and the best editor we have, my essay is taking its shape. I'm not a great writer but with the help I got, I felt like my essay was written by a famous author named Abdul.

—Abdul Daud, St. Paul Harding High School



Because of ThreeSixty, I started to feel comfortable in writing with confidence. I started to feel everything is possible if I try. I appreciated being part of this camp. All those opportunities that I got are of high value to me. Once again, thank you so much for everything.

—Pan Han, Roseville Area High School

About the ThreeSixty Scholar Award

EACH YEAR, HIGH school seniors who are graduates of ThreeSixty programming compete for the ThreeSixty Scholar award—a full-tuition, four-year scholarship to study Communication and Journalism at the University of St. Thomas. Here is an update on our recent scholars.



Samantha HoangLong

Samantha HoangLong, 2017 Scholar

HoangLong, a freshman at the University of St. Thomas, spent her summer interning at ThreeSixty Journalism through the Minnesota Newspaper Association/Pohlada Family Foundation and reporting for TommieMedia.com, St. Thomas' student-run news organization. As part of her internship, HoangLong participated in the program's all-new TV broadcast and radio broadcast camps. She also interviewed Gov. Mark Dayton for a story in this magazine (see page 22).



Danielle Wong

Danielle Wong, 2016 Scholar

Wong, a sophomore at St. Thomas, spent eight weeks interning in Minnesota Public Radio's newsroom through a sponsorship with the Asian American Journalists Association. She reported on crime, the environment and immigration. Wong also continued working for St. Thomas' videography department and St. Thomas' Luann Dummer Center for Women.



Amira Warren-Yearby

Amira Warren-Yearby, 2015 Scholar

Warren-Yearby, a junior at St. Thomas, worked this summer on the St. Thomas conference crew and as a cashier at Whole Foods. She also conducted student research on active social justice, specifically geared toward people of color, with Dr. Artika Tyner, St. Thomas' associate vice president for diversity and inclusion. Warren-Yearby is studying film and television at Bond University in Australia as part of a yearlong study abroad program this school year.



Deborah Honore

Deborah Honore, 2014 Scholar

Honore, a senior at St. Thomas, worked this summer as a reporter for TommieMedia, as a videographer for St. Thomas' Tommie Communications, a student-run advertising agency, and as a student videographer and assistant for the St. Thomas TV studio. Honore also spent three days at Minnesota polar explorer Will Steger's Wilderness Center in Ely and produced a video story on the center.

ThreeSixty Alumni Spotlight *Look, Ma. I'm on TV.*

Hard work brings journalist Levi Ismail from the Midwest to Florida

LEVI ISMAIL'S MOTHER always taught him and his siblings the importance of hard work and wanting to succeed.

Ismail, who moved to Minnesota from Egypt when he was 7 years old, did just that when he pursued a career as a TV broadcast journalist.

"I think I caught [my mother] off guard when I started showing her videos of me actually on TV," said Ismail, who is now a reporter at NBC-2 in Fort Myers, Florida. "Because for her, she pictured TV as this untouchable realm of media where only the prettiest people got on TV."

Ismail was born in Cairo, but his family is from South Sudan. When he came to the U.S., he became a "sponge," he said.

"I soaked up whatever I could find. Learning English didn't really take that much effort," said Ismail, who learned the language by watching cartoons and wrestling on TV with his siblings.

Ismail's interest in journalism began in high school. He took part in a TV production class during his sophomore and junior years at Anoka High School that produced the morning news every school day. Then, his TV journalism teacher and mentor, Bill Leach, introduced him to ThreeSixty



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty Journalism intern

Journalism.

"He was obviously one of our top news anchors ever," said Leach, who is now retired but taught 32 years at Anoka High School. "What really stood out about Levi is [that] his maturity and poise is totally uncrackable. There's nothing that distracts him."

One thing that stands out to Ismail about participating in ThreeSixty Journalism was the diversity, he said. He was surprised to see, in one place, so many



Levi Ismail, a ThreeSixty Journalism alum and the 2008 ThreeSixty Scholar, is a reporter for NBC-2 in Fort Myers, Florida.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI ISMAIL

people from different backgrounds who were passionate about storytelling, he said.

"I remember that first day being very hesitant because I had never experienced anything like it," Ismail said, "but being very enthusiastic at the same time because I knew it was going to be the best choice moving forward in what could be a potential career."

During his senior year, Ismail received a call that he had been selected as the 2008 ThreeSixty Scholar. This gave him the opportunity to attend the University of St. Thomas on a full-tuition scholarship to study Communication and Journalism—which he took.

"That's one thing I know I will never forget—the phone call that I got saying that I received the scholarship," Ismail said. "I remember it like it was yesterday."

"That was a very exciting day for me," he added.

ALUM continued on page 26

Lancaster lands job with Under-Told Stories Project

SIMEON LANCASTER, THE 2013 ThreeSixty Scholar, graduated from the University of St. Thomas in May and recently landed a job with PBS NewsHour's The Under-Told Stories Project, whose executive director and NewsHour correspondent, Fred de Sam Lazaro, is based at St. Thomas.

On Aug. 1, Lancaster started full-time as a production assistant. A former intern with The Under-Told Stories Project, Lancaster will edit stories for

NewsHour, help with production research and execution, and run the website and social media platforms, among other job duties.

"I'm so excited to be producing international, solutions-based journalism that cuts through the news bubble—journalism that the world needs to hear right now," Lancaster said.



Lancaster

HEALTH GAP EQUITY

In partnership with the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention, ThreeSixty's high school journalists tell the stories of health equity in the Twin Cities—and of the people who are working to fill the gaps.

Brightening food deserts

BrightSide Produce's young people bring affordable fruits and veggies to low-income neighborhoods

ADAM KAY WANDERS through a University of St. Thomas garden on a bright summer day, occasionally pulling dead leaves from plants.

"The pumpkins are dying," says Kay, co-founder and director of BrightSide Produce, gesturing to the withering vines.

However, the garden is bursting with vegetables. Green beans dangle in crowded bushes, chives grow like grass with their round purple flowers on tall stems, and basil leaves wave gaily in the summer breeze.

Despite the pumpkins, Kay is delighted by this year's yield, and that of another plot in Wisconsin. A portion of the garden's produce will ultimately be sold in north and south Minneapolis in areas that have less access to fresh, nutritional fruits and vegetables.



Sharee Roman
St. Paul Academy and Summit School

BrightSide Produce launched in 2014 as a partnership between St. Thomas and Community Table, a nonprofit that supports entrepreneurs who contribute to local food systems. Outside of the garden, BrightSide's core operation includes purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables from wholesalers and partnering young people—university students and paid local teenagers—to deliver that produce to corner stores throughout the city's low-income neighborhoods.

"I think that BrightSide is really important in any community it



MICHAELA BARTEL/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Young people involved in BrightSide Produce, including Adam Pruitt (right) and Demetria Fuller (second from right), who co-founded BrightSide Produce with University of St. Thomas professor Adam Kay.

chooses to step into," said Adam Pruitt, one of the co-founders, "because not only are we providing healthy and affordable produce for low-income communities, but also providing jobs for the younger people within those low-income communities."

BrightSide's young people fill its trucks every Saturday with produce and deliver the healthy food to corner stores, charging store owners affordable prices that cover BrightSide's costs and provide neighborhoods that are considered food deserts with nutritious food.

"Corner stores have things that last on the shelf, but they aren't very good for you," said Nicole Herrli, business manager of BrightSide Produce and a senior at St. Thomas, "yet [owners of corner stores] can't afford to buy healthier food."

PRODUCE continued on page 26

‘Bridge of Hope’

St. Paul Rondo community leaders give input on Dale Street Bridge reconstruction project

FOR SOME PEOPLE in St. Paul’s Rondo neighborhood, the Dale Street Bridge Project is more than just an improvement for transportation. To them, it’s a representation of hope and of the Rondo community as a whole.

The historically African-American neighborhood just northwest of downtown St. Paul was torn apart by the construction of I-94 in the 1960s and community leaders say it has never been the same. The reconstruction of the Dale Street Bridge in 2019 may just be one step in the healing process.

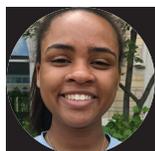
“Dale Street was the heart of the Rondo neighborhood,” said Jens Werner, executive director of the Summit-University Planning Council, which is helping community members work with Ramsey County on the bridge project, “and [residents] feel like that represents hope.”

Melvin Giles, a community activist with the Friendly Streets Initiative, said the reconstruction has taken years to put together because Ramsey County planners wanted to make sure they got plenty of community input.

“They wanted that equity,” said Giles, who lives in Rondo. “They wanted to be able to have a bridge that reflected Rondo, and to help it to be more than just for cars to go across, but to be part of a community.”

Before the interstate cut through the neighborhood, families owned businesses and homes for generations. That changed as people lost their homes and struggled to make a living, Giles said.

“Many weren’t given a choice in the matter,” he said, “and were



Autumn McKinney
Minnetonka High School



Pasaya Moua
St. Paul Harding High School

forced to leave.”

Longtime residents, such as Laverne McCartney Knighton, who has lived in Rondo for more than 20 years, say those changes created challenges for the neighborhood. Many people tend to rent rather than own homes—according to Minnesota Compass, about 63 percent of residents rent in the Frogtown/Thomas-Dale neighborhood and 66 percent rent in the Summit-University neighborhood. McCartney Knighton said that some people don’t seem to have a sense of ownership for the community.

A 2014 walkability study identified the Dale Street Bridge as unfriendly for pedestrians. McCartney Knighton worries about streets that are unsafe for pedestrians, especially those who are handicapped, and about litter that is tossed out on the street by people who pass through and don’t seem to care.

“Right now, there’s nothing beautiful about ... Dale bridge,” McCartney Knighton said. “It’s a dangerous intersection for crossing. Pedestrians can’t really cross it without fear of being hit on the crosswalk.”

When she heard about an effort started to improve the Dale Street



The Dale Street Bridge in St. Paul is scheduled for reconstruction in 2019. A 2014 walkability study found the bridge unfriendly for pedestrians.

Bridge, located at the heart of the community, she attended planning meetings, excited to voice her concerns and be actively involved in improvements. She also picks up trash in the neighborhood.

“I’ve lived in that neighborhood for over 20 years and I don’t think that there was a day that went by that when I turned off 94 to go into my neighborhood that I didn’t say, ‘Man, Dale needs to look better,’” she said. “It’s just not feasible that it can just be ignored like this.”

McCartney Knighton and Giles are among a group of community

members who have been meeting with county leaders about what they want to see in a new bridge. The project is still in the planning stages, but Ramsey County has about \$7.1 million in federal and local funds set aside for the project.

Werner and the Summit-University Planning Council have helped facilitate some of those discussions. She said planners and neighbors want the bridge to reflect the Rondo neighborhood and address concerns about the existing bridge, which wasn’t designed with pedestrians in mind.

“The curbs are super high, the sidewalks are really low, people can’t cross each other on the sidewalk safely, and it’s just kind of a terrifying place to be,” Werner said.

“I just want to see a neighborhood that’s welcoming,” McCartney Knighton said.

The bridge also has been a site for protests in the wake of the Philando Castile shooting. As recently as June 16, protesters used the bridge to block I-94 by entering at the onramp adjacent to the bridge when St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez was acquitted for the shooting, according to the Star Tribune.

The Dale Street Bridge is also called “The Bridge of Hope.” Community organizers want the bridge to be a sign of hope and to reflect people who live there and their community.

They hope to include art as a part of the bridge and have it reflect the Rondo community. The Summit-University Planning Council is advocating for an artist to be involved in the project, according to Werner.

“It shows the community they’re valued,” Werner said, “and it tells others from outside the community that it’s a strong place and that people value it.”



Rondo community members Melvin Giles (right) and Laverne McCartney Knighton blow “peace bubbles” after an interview about the significance of the Dale Street Bridge Project. The two Rondo neighborhood leaders see the bridge as a step toward reconstructing the community.

STAFF PHOTO

AUTUMN MCKINNEY AND PASAYA MOUA/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM



MAGDA ABDI/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

E-cigarettes (shown above) have emerged in popularity in recent years as an alternative to conventional cigarettes. Experts warn against the health effects of e-cigarettes for young people.

The dangers of e-cigarettes

Experts warn against popular smoking alternative

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE who use e-cigarettes, it can start with a vape pen or a hookah pen.

Soon, experts say, they can be deep into the world of nicotine addiction.

E-cigarette companies market the product as a safer alternative to cigarettes, but experts say the product can still be harmful to young people's health.

Companies attract young people to e-cigarettes by packaging them with tasty flavors such as watermelon and Pina Colada. But Dr. Thomas Kottke, a physician at HealthPartners, says that the flavoring in e-cigarettes also can be harmful because it can be unsafe



Magda Abdi
Hiawatha Collegiate High School

to inhale and it hides the taste of nicotine.

"What's particularly concerning to me is the flavorings in the e-cigarettes," Kottke said. "Just because something's safe to eat doesn't mean it's safe to inhale."

E-cigarettes have emerged in popularity in recent years as an alternative to conventional cigarettes. More than 2 million middle and high school students were using

e-cigarettes in 2014, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Spending for e-cigarette advertising has increased in the last six years, and nearly 70 percent of teenagers were exposed to e-cigarette advertising throughout various types of media and stores, according to the CDC.

Misinformation has plagued e-cigarettes, experts say. One side says they're bad because they could carry the same risks as traditional cigarettes, while another side says they are harmless because they contain only water vapor. However, this is not the whole story.

E-cigarettes contain water vapor, yes, but they also contain nicotine, which can be highly addictive for young people, according to experts.

"It's particularly harmful for youth," said Chris Turner, program and media specialist for the Association of Nonsmokers-Minnesota. "... It makes addiction stronger with nicotine when you start when you're younger. And it makes it therefore harder to break."

"What's particularly concerning to me is the flavorings in the e-cigarettes. Just because something's safe to eat doesn't mean it's safe to inhale."

—Dr. Thomas Kottke, HealthPartners



MAGDA ABDI/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Chris Turner, program and media specialist for the Association of Nonsmokers-Minnesota, which works with youth groups across Minnesota to discourage teenagers from using e-cigarettes and advocates for nonsmokers.

Researchers know that e-cigarettes aren't completely safe, but so far, they don't know about the long-term health effects of e-cigarettes. One study this year found e-cigarettes to be safer than regular cigarettes. However, organizations such as the Food and Drug Administration have issued warnings against e-cigarettes.

"You do see short-term effects, like scarring on the lungs, but in terms of whether we can associate specific cancers with the use of these products, we don't know yet," said Grace Higgins, project coordinator at the Physician Advocacy Network at Twin Cities Medical Society. "That remains to be seen. But some of the chemicals that have found to be in e-liquids are known carcinogens."

Higgins said these are the types of things that companies try to hide when marketing to young people. Companies use strategies such as sponsored posts on Instagram. Promotions such as Instagram giveaways require users to "like," tag and repost in order to win vapes.

"They are really effective and smart at luring young people into an addiction, because then they have life-long customers," said Higgins, who primarily works to educate physicians on e-cigarettes. "... That's what we're up against in terms of information."

But anti-smoking advocates are fighting back.

Turner and the Association of Nonsmokers-Minnesota, which aims to reduce the number of young smokers in Minnesota and advocates for nonsmokers, works with youth groups across the metro area—as does the Physician Advocacy Network—in order to discourage teens from using e-cigarettes. The association has pushed local cities to ban e-cigarette use in places where regular cigarettes aren't allowed. In 2014, Minneapolis banned public use of e-cigarettes in indoor spaces such as restaurants and offices.

Turner is hopeful that more communities will start to view e-cigarettes in the same way.

"The endgame is to eradicate smoking," Turner said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AJITH GEORGE

Young people ride bicycles and play games at a recent Open Streets event in Minneapolis. Open Streets events close down roads in well-known Minneapolis neighborhoods and open them up to people and local businesses.

Welcome road closures

Open Streets events inspire health, unite Minneapolis neighbors



Heaven Aschalew
St. Paul Harding High School



Mariah Watley
Sage Academy

IMAGINE A STREET closed down and filled with 80,000 people.

Well, not exactly all at once.

This summer, dozens of blocks of Minneapolis' major streets have closed to traffic so that thousands of people could feel comfortable walking, biking and skateboarding their neighborhoods.

It's called Open Streets, a series of free events that help people get out, be active and explore

local businesses on a weekend afternoon in their communities. Open Streets, in its sixth year, is an initiative of Our Streets Minneapolis—an organization that aims to make biking, walking and rolling “easy and comfortable for everyone”—in partnership with the City of Minneapolis and the Blue Cross Blue Shield Center for Prevention.

“All of it is about health equity,” said Anne Knauff, 63, who’s volunteered at Open Streets for the last six years. “Because all of it encourages physical activities and a healthy lifestyle.”

The June 4 Open Streets event on Lyndale Avenue, for example, spanned 30 blocks from 24th Street to 54th Street. Dozens of mats were laid out on the street for yoga in the gleaming sun. There were wrestling matches and **NEIGHBORS** *continued on page 29*



HEAVEN ASCHALEW/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Anne Knauff, 63, is a veteran volunteer at Open Streets events. “To me, it’s about giving back to the community,” Knauff says.

Partnering to treat mental illness

Nice Ride, HCMC join forces to offer free bike memberships to patients



Erick Castellanos
Minneapolis
Roosevelt
High School



Abdulmalik Daud
St. Paul Harding
High School

THE HENNEPIN COUNTY Medical Center and Twin Cities ride-sharing program Nice Ride are partnering to offer patients with mental illness free use of bikes throughout the summer.

Launched in 2016, the program aims to help people with mental illness build trust, develop good habits and support a healthy lifestyle, program leaders say. The partnership comes as a growing body of

research shows that physical fitness can help people with mental health issues.

“Our actual mission is to ensure that every person who lives in the state of Minnesota has a higher quality of life,” said Tina Cho, access director for Nice Ride Minnesota. “We believe that having access to bikes increases quality of life and increases the quality of the place that you live in.”

People affected by mental illness in the United States die 25 years younger than those without the conditions, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Increasingly, research shows that physical health is tied to mental health, and that people with mental health problems tend to have the same physical problems as the average population but are affected more severely.

Those with severe anxiety and



THREESIXTY STAFF PHOTO

Nice Ride Minnesota and Hennepin County Medical Center have partnered to offer free bike memberships this summer to people with mental illness.

depression, for instance, are more likely to suffer from physical health problems such as high cholesterol, diabetes and heart disease,

according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Exercise is something that can be **NICE RIDE** *continued on page 27*

Fresh produce—and beats

Youth in Appetite for Change bring healthy food, lifestyle to north Mpls

LATAJAH POWELL WAS growing tired of the fast food.

There were 38 fast food restaurants within more than seven square miles in her north Minneapolis neighborhood, she said, but a lack of nearby grocery stores to buy fresh produce.

“I was tired of that stuff,” said Powell, 19, who graduated from Minneapolis Patrick Henry High School in 2015.

This was one of the reasons why her mother, Latasha Powell, co-founded Appetite for Change, a community-led food justice organization that works to lessen the healthy food disparity in north Minneapolis. The organization works closely with youth, training



Amina Muumin
St. Paul Harding
High School

them to grow fresh produce, to sell it in the community and to advocate for food policy change.

“It’s comforting to be able to drive around ... and be like, ‘Oh there’s a place where I can get some good food, and it’s not deep fried and covered in cheese,’” said Ieshia Dabbs, 23, a youth leader at Appetite for Change.

Appetite for Change was founded by Latasha Powell, the current director of programming, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF APPETITE FOR CHANGE

Young people in Appetite for Change pose for a photo in a garden. The organization uses food as a tool for change in north Minneapolis.

Michelle Horovitz, the current executive director, and began operating in 2012 as a response to the food disparities in north Minneapolis.

North Minneapolis is a federally designated food desert, meaning a substantial portion of the

population lives below the poverty line and lives more than a mile away from a grocery store. This means residents have less access to nutritious fruits and vegetables.

Appetite for Change trains community members to cook and

learn about fresh foods. It builds urban farms for local food systems. It has social enterprises in north Minneapolis such as Kindred Kitchen, which people can rent to use for their small businesses, and

APPETITE *continued on page 27*

A new meaning for 'ride sharing'

St. Paul teens teach community about sustainable transportation

EVEN THOUGH MUNIRA Hersi lives only a few blocks away from the Metro Transit bus and light rail stops in St. Paul's Rondo neighborhood, her mother wouldn't let her take the city bus.

"My mom was concerned about my safety," said Hersi, 15.

But sometimes that was Hersi's only option if her mother couldn't pick her up right away.

Thanks to the St. Paul Smart Trips program, Hersi learned how to take the city bus.

St. Paul Smart Trips, which recently merged with Transit for Livable Communities, is a nonprofit that educates the public about safer and easier transportation options in St. Paul and addresses local transportation issues. Young people in Smart Trips' youth program, such as Hersi, also have served as transportation advocates in St. Paul's Frogtown neighborhood.

"If you don't have a way of getting around safely, you might never want to go anywhere," said Mark Olivares, youth coordinator at St. Paul Smart Trips. "You might just want to just stay in your neighborhood, stay at home and not explore."

Education is a key part of Smart Trips. Student interns are



Dang Her
St. Paul Johnson High School



Asia Mohamed
St. Paul Harding High School

encouraged to go out into their communities and educate people about sustainable transportation options, such as biking, walking, busing and riding the light rail.

The program targets people who don't want to drive or don't have access to a vehicle and may think a car is the only way of getting around, according to Olivares.

Hersi became involved in the youth program, called the Frogtown Neighborhoods Program. She interns now at Smart Trips and said she learned the routes in her neighborhood from the program.

Once she understood how to use the bus, Hersi became confident and more active in her community, she said. When Hersi's mother saw her daughter taking the bus safely, she felt better sending her daughter on the bus, according to Hersi.



From left to right, Youth Coordinator Mark Olivares and youth interns Cecillian Vang, Keleenah Yang and Munira Hersi are part of St. Paul Smart Trips, a nonprofit that teaches people how to use sustainable transportation and serves as a transportation advocate.

Now her mom understands "there are cameras in the bus," Hersi said. Some days, her mom tells her, "I am not driving you today, take the bus," according to Hersi.

Another student intern, Keleenah Yang, 17, said she had never ridden a bike or used the bus before she learned about Smart Trips.

"A lot of people don't go out into the community, especially in Frogtown, from my experience," said Yang, who lives in Frogtown. "I didn't really know anybody in my community, but once I started going out there, I saw that I should go out more."

Since Smart Trips taught Yang how to use the bus, she has learned "riding the bus is fun, and you kind of become independent," she said.

Smart Trips partnered with the Kitty Andersen Youth Science Center, which Yang was a part of, for youth to work in the Frogtown community. Youth in the Frogtown program, which ended in 2015, engaged the community, conducted a survey, installed bike racks, painted a community mural and held a community block party, according to Smart Trips' website.

Despite the program's ending, the work continued. In 2016, Smart Trips youth surveyed the Frogtown

neighborhood about ways to improve Metro Transit experiences, gathered information in an effort to improve Frogtown's future plans, and more.

Yang, who joined the Frogtown program to be more active in her community, became a sort-of ambassador for public transportation, and she introduced her friend, Cecillian Vang, 16, to Smart Trips.

Vang is now an intern with Smart Trips, and she is pushing for more transportation options in her neighborhood on St. Paul's East Side.

"I live in the East Side, and bikes are expensive," Vang said. "And it's hard if you don't have a bike. Where I live all we have is city buses, and I feel like not a lot of people go out and bike either. It's because they can't afford it and there's a lack of bike shops in the East Side."

While Smart Trips' youth program has been focused on the Frogtown area, Olivares hopes the program can expand its reach to other underserved areas, such as the East Side.

In the meantime, the student interns say they're already noticing a difference in the community. They have more freedom using public transportation and feel safer, which is something they've taught others.

"It's good for communities to get together because it will change their understanding of who lives in the community," Vang said. "It's just a good way to get everyone out, to get to know everyone more, to make them feel more safe in the community, because no one wants to live in a community where they feel unsafe."

"If you don't have a way of getting around safely, you might never want to go anywhere."

—Mark Olivares, youth coordinator at St. Paul Smart Trips

"It's just a good way to get everyone out, to get to know everyone more, to make them feel more safe in the community, because no one wants to live in a community where they feel unsafe."

—Cecillian Vang, youth intern at St. Paul Smart Trips

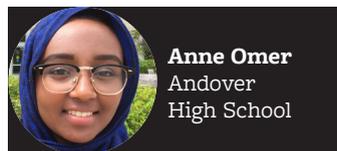
A source of food and unity

South Minneapolis garden tackles issues of diversity, food security and sustainability

AT THE GANDHI Mahal Interfaith Garden in south Minneapolis, food brings people of diverse faiths and circumstances together.

The garden is a collaboration between three local groups: Minnesota Interfaith Power & Light (MNIPL), Gandhi Mahal restaurant in Minneapolis and First Nations Kitchen, a ministry of All Saints Episcopal Indian Mission in Minneapolis.

Half the fruits and vegetables grown in the garden during growing season are used to create traditional South Asian dishes at the nearby Gandhi Mahal Restaurant. The



Anne Omer
Andover High School

rest of the produce is used by First Nations Kitchen to prepare free weekly meals for members of the community, including some who are homeless.

“The most basic thing in life is food,” said The Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls, the founder of First Nations Kitchen. “The people we work with at First Nations Kitchen are living on the margins of society,

the very people that most folks in America have a disdain for because of preconceived notions of how folks got to where they’re at.

“What we try to do is provide really good food to people who couldn’t otherwise afford that kind of food and have access to fresh produce.”

Following weekly Sunday dinners, leaders of First Nations Kitchen invite guests to walk four blocks from the mission to the Gandhi Mahal Interfaith Garden. The garden practices regenerative agriculture—cultivating healthy soils to create a sustainable food system and a stable climate, according to the website for MNIPL, a nonprofit that works with faith communities on climate change issues.

At the garden, visitors can listen to local musicians and poets, while also interacting with community members of all faiths in an “Open Garden Night,” according to MNIPL’s Claire Baglien, the garden’s coordinator.

“The idea behind Open Garden Night is that it’s a **GARDEN** continued on page 28



STAFF PHOTO

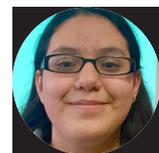
The Rev. Canon Robert Two Bulls (left), founder of First Nations Kitchen, and Claire Baglien, Gandhi Mahal Interfaith Garden coordinator, survey the garden on a July afternoon in Minneapolis. Through a partnership, the garden provides produce for Gandhi Mahal Restaurant in Minneapolis and First Nations Kitchen.

Hot dogs at the ballpark? Think again.

Youth in Roots for the Home Team create, sell salads at local sports venues



Pan Han
Roseville Area High School



Janet Valdez
Minneapolis Roosevelt High School

IT’S THE SEVENTH-INNING stretch at Target Field, and you start to get hungry.

Everywhere at the Minnesota Twins ballpark, you can find hot dogs, nachos and other fast-food options. But at Gate 34, you can find a different, healthier option.

You may not think about salads when you think about baseball game concessions, but youth in Twin Cities nonprofit Roots for the Home Team are trying to change that. The organization sells homegrown salads, created by youth from local gardening programs with help from Twin Cities chefs, at sports venues.

For example, one salad, called “Ode to **SALAD** continued on page 28



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROOTS FOR THE HOME TEAM

Youth in Roots for the Home Team pose for a photo at Target Field. Youth in the program grow produce, create salads and sell them at local sports venues such as Target Field and TCF Bank Stadium.

ThreeSixty| COLLEGE ESSAY BOOT CAMP

Kicking students' college essays into shape!



STAFF PHOTO

ThreeSixty Journalism high school students and young alums during College Essay Boot Camp in June.

THE MAGIC OF College Essay Boot Camp continues.

This summer, high school students from across the Twin Cities traveled to the University of St. Thomas for ThreeSixty Journalism summer camps. Their first order of business: Complete their college essays.

Our Boot Camp pairs students with volunteer writing coaches and teaches them the nuances of writing the all-important college essay. In the span of four days, they each

complete a polished, adaptable college essay that will help land them in colleges and universities. It's no small task.

In the process, students find that their stories are important—often remarkable—and that their voices matter. We believe that when students understand the power of their own stories, they become better storytellers. And year after year, these students amaze us with their personal life experiences.

We hope their stories amaze you, too.

Telling my story, without a costume



Anne Omer
Andover High School

THE DRESS WAS knee-length, frilled, and made of a blue material that resembled a shaggy carpet. In retrospect, it was hideous. But in that very moment, I felt like a princess.

My parents left Ethiopia equipped with an artillery

of stories. The stories held a common theme—overcoming adversity. Instead of glass slippers and Prince Charming, my princesses were leaders of tribes, strong women, sweeping in to save their village from impending threats. As a child, these stories embodied who I wanted to become.

As I entered elementary school, my outlook was challenged. Going

to a culturally homogenous school, I was yanked out of the comfort of my home and catapulted into an unfamiliar position—being visibly different. I was left to watch my peers from the sidelines, from classroom Christmas celebrations to the food served in the cafeteria (the closest I got to eating pig was through animal crackers).

But by far, the most disheartening occasion to sit out of was

Halloween. Every year, my elementary school held a costume parade. Unfamiliar with the holiday, my parents never bought me a costume. Thus, every year, I was forced to sit and watch my peers transform before my eyes, from frenzied 6-year-olds to some of my favorite characters.

By the third grade, I grew tired of having to sit out of the Halloween

COLLEGE ESSAY *continued on page 18*



A stand-in parent

MY ARMS SCREAMED in protest, crying mutiny against my mind even as screams, loud and physical, erupted from my youngest sister.

At 2 years old, her small physical stature belied the strength of her cries. Fat, ugly tears drew salt streaked trails on her cheeks, bright red and burning from the exertion of crying for the past hour. Perhaps this wouldn't have been out of place—the image of an older sibling calming a younger one—had it not been 3 a.m. on a Tuesday.

Still, despite the late hour and tempting desire to pawn her off to one of my other siblings and sleep, I simply sighed, heaved her sobbing form higher and continued to



Chia Thao
St. Paul
Highland Park
High School

placate her in whatever way I could.

My mother disappeared at the end of March three years ago. There was no panic, no missing-persons report, no action taken in response to her rather abrupt disappearance from my life. She returned days later, a tiny bundle swaddled with blankets in her arms.

Of course, I knew she had been pregnant beforehand. I had watched as her stomach gradually swelled, ballooning with the

newest arrival in my family. I even took over most of her household duties as her pregnancy progressed. However, I never anticipated the changes that my sister's birth would bring.

With her arrival, my responsibilities doubled, and one of those soon included acting as a stand-in parent and caretaker whenever needed. While I had spent the majority of my life watching over my siblings, they had been only a few years younger than me. The 15-year age gap between me and my newest sister was something completely different. Adapting to my new responsibilities was difficult, whether it was ensuring her safety and distance while I diced vegetables or completing a reading assignment while carrying her.

Such a heavy responsibility had its ups and downs. It led to a

*College is the first step
in improving my
family's situation.*

great amount of stress and worry for me, and yet, the trust I've received from my family in turn is something that I cherish. This experience has changed me in many ways and made me grow in many more. Balancing school and chores with my sister has taught me the determination to succeed despite obstacles. Taking care of her also helped me learn the dedication necessary to continue forward in all things I do. In the process, I've gained a motivation and drive to succeed.

Even as I recount the nights I sacrificed to comfort her, I still

vividly recall the radiant smile on her face. The moment I closed the door and turned around, loaded down with textbooks and school supplies, I heard it: the loud patter of running feet pounding against the varnished wood floor. The excited shout of my name that disappeared in the air as tiny arms wrapped around my legs.

She looked up at me, beaming with happiness and laughs: an infectious laughter that draws forth my own smile in response. My sister no longer cries as much, but I want to ensure that she doesn't have to cry for parents that cannot be there. College is the first step in improving my family's situation. And this experience has already taught me the dedication, determination and drive necessary to succeed not only in college, but also in life.

On a mission to help others

I AM LYING on the playground, looking up at the other kids like they are giants. One kid keeps kicking me in the stomach.

Fifth grade was where school went wrong. Lunch is where the abuse started and continued. There was one kid who seemed to torture me for his amusement. He'd be the one hurting me the most, physically and emotionally.

I couldn't defend myself, no one stood up for me, and it never stopped.



Jose Galvan Castro
Cristo Rey
Jesuit High
School

I felt alone, helpless and worthless.

I was in a dark place that year, crying myself to sleep, knowing it would happen again tomorrow. I wasn't a tough kid and I didn't have a big brother to help me, and my dad was always working.

My older sister was the one who encouraged me, even though I never told her exactly what was happening. She was an outcast, too, bullied because of her weight. Her love and support kept me going through really dark days.

But I still couldn't stop the abuse during that entire school year. Finally, just a few days before summer vacation, my tormenter and I were called to the school office. Somebody had finally reported the bullying.

It was over now, but the damage was already done. I have forgiven my bully and those who encouraged him. But I still have flashbacks. I can't erase that memory, but my life is better now, and I try every day to

help and encourage other kids who are having emotional problems. My purpose in life is to never let anyone feel that they're alone and hopeless. That's my mission every day.

I've brought that sense of responsibility home as well. My parents taught me to always offer help to others and to never ask for anything in return. It just took me a few years to embrace that concept.

When I was 13 years old and my younger brother was 5, I realized that he was copying my life. I would make mistakes, and he would mimic them. I knew that I had to set a better example, to be for him the big brother I never had.

I was 15 when my baby sister was born. I raced to see her at the

hospital. When I got there, I felt like I had just run the Boston Marathon. Seeing my mom holding a little angel, Alessandra, I felt incredible happiness – but I also began to realize that my role in the family was becoming more important than ever. I had not only a little brother, but a baby sister to help raise.

In college, I want to study psychology and filmmaking. Both these things are rooted in my desire to help others suffering from emotional distress. Videos can be a valuable tool in helping people understand difficult emotions and situations.

The bottom line is: I've been in a dark place myself. I want to help others climb out of that place.



Choosing the right path

IF I HADN'T moved away from Gary, Indiana, I would be in a juvenile facility or possibly pregnant.

Growing up with my mom and older brother in a small neighborhood known as Tarrytown, where almost everyone was black, those around me were going down the wrong path.

Instead of getting good-paying jobs, they chose to sell drugs, use violence, steal, gangbang, drink and smoke weed. Even at 7 years old, I picked up some of those bad habits. I didn't care about my education,



Gabriel Hearne
Columbia Heights High School

I started fighting boys and I stayed out late. My mind was set on having devious fun. Compared to my friends though, I wasn't as bold when it came to being disrespectful or displaying destructive behavior.

Things got worse when my great-grandmother died. Our family struggled to cope.

Months later, my mom made an announcement that made my heart drop.

"I want to start over and we're moving to Minnesota," she said, "so we can have a better life."

I thought about all the people I'd be leaving behind. What about my dad, who lived with his new family? And my little half-brothers? My friends?

Reality hit me when I was giving away my toys, packing clothes, noticing boxes and seeing the moving truck.

My mom had a friend in Minnesota and that's who we stayed with. The first two years was one of the loneliest times of my life. Everyone welcomed me when I

first arrived, but after that, it was difficult to make friends. I felt like an outcast.

Life got better in junior high. I started doing my work and paying attention in school. I talked to my teachers when I needed help, I found the value in schoolwork even though it was challenging, and I also made supportive friends.

My freshman year I signed up for school activities, such as student council and sports. I stayed after for homework help. I also signed up for College Possible, a college prep program for low-income students

of color.

I've heard from relatives that some young women like me in Gary, Indiana, did end up behind bars and pregnant. I am happy to say I have not experienced either.

My experience from my great-grandma's death to now has changed dramatically. I went from staying outside as if I didn't have a home to staying in the house as if I don't have anywhere to go.

But I know I do have somewhere to go. I'm on the path to college and to fulfill my dream of becoming a doctor.

I'm on the path to college and to fulfill my dream of becoming a doctor.

Honoring a father and his legacy

I HATE THE smell of hospitals. The pungent, sterile odor of the place where some people go to die takes me back to the year I turned 7 years old.

At this point, I had already been familiar with the hallways, the room where my dad lay in a coma for a month because of a stroke, and our routine: I get to touch his head, talk to him and plead for him to get better so he can take me to the park.

But, this day was different. I had just arrived to the hospital with other family members when I noticed my sister, clearly distressed, coming toward us. Her sobs told me something was really wrong.



Zong Xiong
Champlin Park High School

"My father just died," she let out. Life afterward became dreadful. The world I once knew became dark and unfair. The man who brought so much joy and laughter in my life was suddenly taken away. In school, I noticed my perspective was different from my classmates. I started to feel like an outcast. While the other children smiled at their father, I cried for mine.

On top of that, financial issues emerged, which drowned my mom

in debt. This led to the foreclosure of my family's home. We frantically scouted the area and found an affordable rental in the same school district, but my mother still struggled. Rent. Six growing kids. Utilities. The bills mounted.

No family plans for a sudden death of a loved one, nor is a family ready to lose their house on a sudden notice. More importantly, a family is never prepared to face a new reality. But somehow, these adversities made us stronger.

Being the youngest, I am grateful to my older siblings for the choices they made in their lives. They allowed me to live life peacefully like a newborn child and focus on school. Before entering high school, I observed how my siblings were able to maintain a high GPA and graduate with honors even though they had to stress about work and

My greatest inspiration comes from my father, who was well-respected and dearly missed by his friends and family.

school. This inspired me to do my best because if they are able to succeed, I can too.

My greatest inspiration comes from my father, who was well-respected and dearly missed by his friends and family. He was labeled educated even though he never received formal schooling. He would always instruct me and my siblings to focus on our studies and avoid playing around—mainly advising us all to grasp every opportunity before it was too late. The way he positively influenced so many people during his lifetime is why I look up to him and want to be like him.

I took all the rigorous courses in high school. I can still remember scanning through my textbook on the night of May 4, 2016, the day before my AP history exam. I decided to challenge myself more by enrolling into PSEO my junior year. Additionally, I joined College Possible, which gave me the opportunity to expand my knowledge on education beyond high school. This has helped me prepare for college and my dream of going to medical school.

I can visualize the day I will stretch out my arm to receive my diploma to honor my dad and his legacy.



‘Wherever you come from does not define you’

WHEN I TELL people I live in north Minneapolis, their eyes often get wide.

I get it. Drive-by shootings, poverty and drugs surround my block, along with the constant smell of marijuana. Fluffy brown and white teddy bears remember the dead, barely hanging by their strings on trees and posts. Young men hang around corner stores, asking teenagers to buy drugs. They often hide in the dark shadows.

Some of them were even my friends growing up. Tears of sadness fall down my cheek knowing that most of my friends in the neighborhood will not graduate.

I was born and raised in one of the most crime-filled



Jose Popoca Palmas
Cristo Rey
Jesuit High School

neighborhoods in all of Minnesota. My freshman year, I started spiraling down the same path as some of the gangbangers around me, but gladly, my mom stopped that from happening. Despite all the violence and gangs surrounding my neighborhood, my mother has inspired me to rise above, to go to college and to become a filmmaker.

My freshman year of high school was one of the worst but most impactful years in my life. It was a

late summer day in 2014, the crickets chirped to the moonlight and my room was just quiet enough to hear the atmosphere around me. The voices from the downstairs dining room pounded against my bedroom walls, and my curiosity followed the noise.

The wind slapped the window as I quietly made my way toward the yelling. As I stepped forth with heavy strides, I peeked around the corner to see my mother and father in the dining room. My dad said in his native Spanish, “We don’t have enough money to pay the bills.”

I glanced down in sorrow, knowing I was too young to help them. But I decided then and there that I was destined to break the cycle of living in poverty. It all started with my mother’s support.

She would constantly remind me to do well in school because education was important to her. She did not have the opportunity

to attend college because she was born and raised in a poor, broken home in Mexico. She crossed the U.S.-Mexico border not knowing what the future had in store for her, but she was willing to risk it all for a chance for a better future for her children. Her goal in life was to see her children accomplish what she could not growing up.

My mom means more to me than any of my former drug addict friends, many of whom I know will not graduate. She’s the reason that I live safely in my neighborhood and stopped hanging out with some of the bad influences around me. “A mother can always predict if your friends are good or bad,” she’d tell me.

She’s also the reason I attend Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in south Minneapolis, where I met impactful teachers and friends that would guide one another in the search for success. They helped me get mentally ready for college and to

find the right college as well.

Over time I started realizing that everything my mom had told me was right. I started taking school more seriously, asking help from history, English and math teachers, and studying more. I stayed out of the north Minneapolis streets and was more active in the classrooms and in soccer, as well as in volunteering in church. I also dove into the world of creativity, creating videos with friends that would make people in the community laugh.

Attending college to study film, writing and journalism would show my family and friends that wherever you come from does not define you. I started to realize that with dedication and hard work, I am able to accomplish anything.

I used to believe that my surroundings would define who I am, but I was wrong. Thanks to my mom’s guidance, I am able to define my own future.

COLLEGE ESSAY from page 15

parade. I decided that it would be the year to convince my mom to buy me a costume.

It wasn’t an easy feat. After my unrelenting protests, she came back from our garage with a dress in hand. The dress was a traditional Ethiopian garment from her childhood, disheveled from years of neglect.

“Here, a costume,” she said grudgingly, tossing me the dress. “You can go as an African princess.”

I was overwhelmed with excitement. Prancing into the school with my new outfit, I held my head high, the stories about valiant princesses coming to life within me. However, as I walked past the procession of Cinderellas and Power Rangers, my excitement quickly

diminished. Nobody else was wearing a costume like mine.

My attempt to “fit in” backfired. It struck me that even while in costume, I couldn’t escape the reality that I would always be different.

So my days in elementary and middle school became what I had so desperately wanted, a costume. I began concealing my accent by remaining silent. The intricate braids that I once wore with joy were chemically treated away. The pride that I grew up feeling for my culture turned into shame. I rejected my culture, and rejected the stories that came along with it.

And as my attitude about my culture shifted, so did the stories I heard from my

parents. No longer was I being told innocent tales about princesses. The stories became strikingly visual. Stories of my father, held captive and tortured by the military, came to life by the scars on his body. Stories of escaping war-torn areas by foot, captured by rough soles and damaged toenails. Stories of family members being forcibly silenced, leaving my parents shaken by the echoes of the past.

Like my family, I also lived in silence as I concealed this part of my identity.

It wasn’t until I entered high school that these negative feelings disintegrated. I realized that unlike my parents, I was fortunate enough to grow up in a country that protected my rights. I lived in a country where I could have a voice.

I joined my high school’s speech team, initially with fear, and turned it into my platform to speak up for the voiceless. Despite my reputation of silence, I went on to become my school’s most decorated speaker. Gradually, I got louder. I spoke at school board meetings about equity in education. I spoke at my local party meetings. I became appointed to represent my congressional district on the Minnesota Youth Council, the only legislatively mandated youth council in the country, dedicated to amplifying the voices of young people like myself.

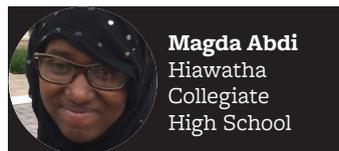
And I plan to continue speaking, because here in America, I have the chance to write my own story. A story that doesn’t require a costume.

Raising my voice and gaining confidence

ON A HUMID day in June, I landed in Boston, feeling tense. I was away from home, away from my family. I was scared.

I took my first step toward the grounds of Boston College with a desire to improve myself, but what I didn't know was that this experience would be the opportunity to become more confident. Overcoming my shyness gave me the ability to rise up against any challenge.

I had always struggled with silence. I didn't start talking until I was 3 years old, and my challenge became more difficult when I started to go to school. Then I was in front of the most judging and brutal audience—my peers. It wasn't a problem when casually talking to a friend, but when I had to answer a question or speak in



Magda Abdi
Hiawatha
Collegiate
High School

front of the class, I went blank.

As the years went on, my shyness began to turn into an insecurity. I felt more difficulty interacting with people, especially people I didn't know. I thought that they were judging me, the way I talked, the way I looked, etc. I always thought that people were seeing me as a liability, another person to include in conversations and activities. So I preferred for most of my middle school years to not really befriend people and to avoid challenges.

This changed at the beginning of my freshman year when I started

to believe in my abilities and take chances without the fear of being judged. This helped me to take advantage of opportunities, for example, being approached and signing up for a college readiness program. I befriended people easily because I pushed my anxieties aside. By changing the way I thought about myself, I began to be more social.

My second year in high school, I started to take on my challenges head on and tried to not be so afraid of rejection. I wanted to get out of my comfort zone and try something new. My school was offering a program for a select group of students to take pre-college programs in local and national colleges.

At first, the idea of leaving my

family even for a small amount of time made me very nervous, so I wanted to do a local program. I decided to talk to my mom. She was also nervous, but encouraged me to go to a national college.

"I want you to fly away," she told me. This was surprising because my mom was always overprotective of me.

"So, what are you thinking on where to go?" asked Estrella, my program coordinator. It was a few days after the talk with my mom, yet I still had doubts on whether going out of state was the right choice for me. I surprised myself when I agreed to fill out the application for the Boston College program.

The program was difficult at first. It was hard to make friends, since I

had come a day late in the program. The other kids seemed wealthier, smarter and more worldly than me, which was really intimidating. I felt like I didn't have much to contribute to the discussion. This, combined with the fact that I had felt really homesick, made me feel sad. But I decided to not let it get to me, and I started to feel better about the experience.

I made friends, and I started to realize that my uniqueness is what I had to contribute to the classroom, to my friends. I didn't need to be the same as everyone else. When I had this mindset, I felt like I made the most of the trip.

I left Boston College feeling content in that I had overcome my shyness. I interacted with people from all over the world, and I intrigued and surprised them with my knowledge of obscure pop culture references. This experience will have a lasting impact on me, and it gives me confidence in handling life's challenges.

I started to realize that my uniqueness is what I had to contribute to the classroom, to my friends. I didn't need to be the same as everyone else.

'A rainbow of identities'

I FELT LIKE I was in a whole new world. This was the first time I was attending a Pride event.

I stopped by a stand that was selling flags. They were all so beautiful. All the colors and all the symbols on them were what drew me in, specifically one decorated with pink, yellow and blue. I asked the girl working at the stand what that flag represented. It was one I had not seen before.

"It's the pansexual flag," she responded.

Somehow, I got the courage to ask what pansexual meant.

"It's when a person loves everyone, regardless of what they identify as," she said. "It's more about the feelings as opposed to the gender of



Heidi Sanchez Avila
Hiawatha
Collegiate
High School

the person."

I was drawn into what the girl said at the end, and I felt like she had described me. I decided to buy the flag. I wore the flag around me with a huge, dorky smile. Once I had it on, I felt invincible. Something was finally aligning within me and who I was. After all the spirals of darkness, I had found something I felt connected with: an identity.

I grew up an only child. My parents had conventional notions about gender and sexuality, so I

felt alone when confronting my true feelings. As I grew up I never heard anything other than "Pink is for girls and blue is for boys," "Why aren't you more feminine?," and "Why don't you have a boyfriend?"

I felt like if I came out, I would be shamed. It left me confused and lost as to who I truly was inside. Around the time I was 14, I became fully aware of my life and what was going around me. I started to develop feelings and emotions for people, boys, girls and everyone in between. I was confused and felt there was something weird about me I couldn't talk about. I realized that I was

losing control of my feelings and myself. I felt so alone. Everything was bottled up. There was no one to talk to. Darkness and depression engulfed me.

In my freshmen year of high school, I developed a close relationship with my advisor. Before she left the school she gifted me a book and told me to read the note inside when I felt like I wasn't happy with myself. It read, "Keep learning about Heidi and continue to love Heidi. It will be your greatest accomplishment."

She taught me to stand up to the world, and if I know what I love and who I love, nobody mattered but

myself and how I viewed myself. She taught me that I had to love myself and accept the Heidi that was in rainbows, because that's the best Heidi there is. Learning about who I was when all the darkness was around me changed me. It made me a lot more open to sexualities and gender identities. It showed me the world isn't only black and white, but that it comes in a rainbow of identities.

Moving into the rest of my life, I hope to get a chance to be able to have a discussion with my parents about my gender identity and sexuality. I also want to be able to get past all these insecurities that come along with my depression.

I will be proud of my own identity. As I move forward with my life, I only hope to educate people on the fact the world is an assortment of colors and that they are what make life great.

As I move forward with my life, I only hope to educate people on the fact the world is an assortment of colors and that they are what make life great.

The value of education

THE SCORCHING HEAT and blazing sun signified the first day of summer break in 2015. I had just completed my seventh-grade year and my report card finally arrived in the mail.

As I held the envelope in my hand, I gazed at it with anticipation. I gripped the paper until my fingers went numb. My breathing was audible.

“This is it,” I thought, my body temperature excelling. With all of the courage I could muster, I tore open the envelope and cautiously lifted the paper. I looked at the



Safiya Mohamed
St. Paul Central High School

sheet for a mere second and began to jump for joy at what I saw: a 4.0 GPA.

After years of struggling in school, education finally clicked and became a value for me. I understood that hard work did pay off, and that 4.0 proved it. My perspective on education shifted when I began to attend an online school.

Prior to seventh grade, I slacked off in school and didn't apply myself, but I didn't have anyone to motivate me to do otherwise. My parents didn't value education as much as they should've because they were never taught its importance. They were immigrants from Somalia to a new country, and prioritizing education was new to them so they never instilled those morals in me or my siblings. But by the time I entered junior high, my mother had learned more about the importance of education and decided to take some action when she noticed me struggling.

When I started my new school, it was difficult. I took advanced English, world history, pre-algebra,

biology and art. I didn't have a teacher to assist me, which became a challenge. But after a while, my work became less complicated. I began to devote myself and care about my grades. I even worked ahead during the school year until I completed my seventh-grade year two months early. My mother had never been prouder in her life.

When I commenced my freshman year, after spending two years in an online classroom, the transition was a little hard, but I kicked off high school on a good note. I took the experience and lessons I learned during seventh grade and incorporated them into my ninth grade year. I began to realize that I was smart and I am capable of achieving success.

For the first time in my life, I started to contemplate college. I began to develop a vision of what I want to study and what my future career might be: journalism. As a child, I always had a burning passion for writing. I would indulge myself in it as a pastime. I used to fill up notebook after notebook with stories and prompts just for fun. My love for writing strengthened as I began to excel in my English classes.

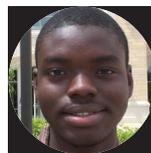
I believe that I now have a strong foundation for myself so that I can succeed in high school, college and many other endeavors to come. I now see what I can do with an education, and I have grown to love it and learn its importance in my life. What I once despised has now turned into my success story.

6,373 miles to the 'land of dreams'

THE PEOPLE ON the plane reminded me of the soccer players and cartoon characters I saw on television. It was like another world. Not many people looked like me.

Outside, the fluffy clouds, the green land and the blue ocean made me feel like I was flying over paradise. I quickly realized there is more in the world than I ever dreamed.

I flew to the United States in May 2012 from my hometown of Lagos, Nigeria. I was 11 years old. Lagos isn't as educated as the rest of the world. Most people never finish



Abdulmalik Daud
St. Paul Harding High School

high school, and those who do find there are no jobs to reward them for their schooling.

As a child in Lagos, my school focused on math. I was not interested, though.

That began to change soon after our massive plane landed at Minneapolis-St. Paul International

Airport. The day before my first day of school, a Sunday, I was happy and excited to start my new education. Day one was warm, the sun shining through the sky and the wind blowing. I climbed onto the school bus and began the ride of my new life.

I was shocked, surprised and happy when I had learned we were going to the U.S. Over time, this new society has changed my view of the world.

I've learned we went to the moon, learned there is a solar system, and learned that atoms, molecules, particles, bacteria and viruses exist. I discovered the periodic table and was taught how physics, trigonometry and

equations are used to build complex buildings and formulas that solve the most complex things in today's world. Most important, I learned here, in the United States, if you get an education you can be anything you want to be. You can get a job to provide for your family. I know if I take a chance at every opportunity that presents itself, it will lead me to where I want to be—the top.

It took 6,373 miles across the world to arrive in my new land of dreams. The U.S. showed me a world bigger than me, my family and my hometown. I am 16 years old now, and my curiosity continues to grow and grow. I embrace U.S. culture while still appreciating my

Nigerian roots. I look back at Lagos and appreciate the modern ways of the U.S. and everything it has to offer. Embracing my new society helps me focus on the big picture. My curiosity is the fuel to keep my dreams going.

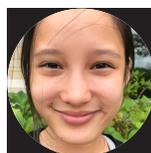
I am independent, ambitious, tough, smart, eager and willing. I am ready to earn a degree in engineering and build structures that last a lifetime. Most important, I will provide for my family in a way that would have been impossible in Nigeria.

The land of opportunities has shown me that growth creates success, and growth comes from hard work. I am ready to lead my family and my generation.

Driven by my mother's sacrifices

IT WAS A humid summer day of my fourth year in America when I decided to apply for Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) to help me achieve my goal of a college education.

I inhaled a deep breath and checked the “No high school diploma” box for my parents' education. My mother, a 57-year-old immigrant widow, works every day



Pay Poe
Roseville Area High School

just to be able to afford a one-bed apartment for a household of four.

On May 9, 2000, I was born in Burma, now known as Myanmar, under the name Naw Saw K Pay

Poe. When I turned 2, my dad passed away and life became difficult. I could sense that people looked down on my family because our household leader was no longer a man. Throughout this experience, I felt my mom's pain, but she never gave up on me. She shows me and everyone around her that she can live without a man.

When I was 5, my family moved to a Thailand refugee camp because my mother wanted greater opportunities for her family. My mom taught me to take advantage of every opportunity that I have. I learned

numerous lessons from growing up with my mother. She inspires me through her actions and work ethic.

Until I turned 12, I had no hopes, dreams or future. I never imagined myself going to college.

My school in Thailand was built out of bamboo and there were blackboards instead of smartboards. The school didn't provide buses, lunch or breakfast. Students were hit with bamboo sticks for not completing assignments as small as memorizing a paragraph.

There were few resources, but it was better than my mother's

education experience. My mom couldn't afford to pay for school because she had to work each day to survive. In addition, there was limited education due to the long civil war between the Karen and Burmese soldiers.

In the summer of 2012, my family moved to the United States from the Thailand refugee camp, and I became Pay Poe. After moving to the U.S., life became difficult again. It was a new country with new people.

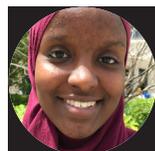
When I arrived at my new school, I had no clue why I was there.

AVID continued on page 21

Reading, writing and happiness

AS A YOUNG Somali girl, I found my escape through the fictional worlds of “Junie B. Jones” and “Clarice Bean.”

Although we were the same age, I could not relate much to their adventures and culture, as I had a more mundane life in contrast to their zanier ones. I would journey to school, return home and finish my homework—as well as prepare meals and complete any weekend Islamic school work and other duties. But these characters played spy and had playful food fights, traveled to different lands and solved vast problems. The books made me feel euphoric and released my imagination. It also became a source of inspiration for me when I started to write my own adventures.



Samira Mohamed
St. Paul Harding
High School

I truly adore stories, because of how easy it is to get sucked into them. How wonderful each and every one of their worlds were, and how interesting. There were days where I would come home feeling a bit abandoned inside from walking around recess absentmindedly and alone, and I could just open the latest installment of “Clarice Bean” and just start reading.

This habit of reading was ingrained into my brain, and it made me want to start writing as

well. I would read almost every day, and nearly everywhere I went.

Those days where I would come home feeling “bad” originated from the fact that I had kept moving one too many times, resulting in not being close with anyone else. I didn’t have much of a best friend up until third grade, and that went out the window by fifth. I relocated to urban St. Paul, where I dealt with unnecessarily discourteous classmates who would come after me if I looked at them wrong, even by accident. My very own teacher, Mr. Clomon, had to help me with two girls who kept bothering me, because I answered “no” to their question about me having a boyfriend. It wasn’t the best of times, truly.

Writing is what got me through those circumstances. I was able to create something with my own bare hands, a piece of paper and a pen. With every piece that I

wrote, I felt myself getting sucked into my own world, which was wonderful. With each page I had completed, it made me feel like I had a voice.

Back when I used to be taunted, I didn’t really have the confidence to say what I wanted to say, but now I can write it. If there ever are times where I am put down by others, I’m able to write it all down. In doing so, this helps relieve any stress as I’m expressing myself through the words I pour onto paper, and it aided me in school by destroying any further distractions that loomed around me.

And even though I kept moving to different neighborhoods, the worlds I read about and the safe space I’d have to write was consistently there for me. This gives me a sense of empowerment wherever I go; and for the first time in a few years, I feel a lift that keeps a smile on my face and imaginative

thoughts running through my head when I’m reading and writing.

Being able to write changed me in a way that I didn’t know it could. Things became a little bit better after the years went by. It gave me something to be proud of, something I can have pride in accomplishing.

Years ago, I wouldn’t have been able to complete more than two pages of writing, but now I can. Fictional literature has allowed me to be sucked into the world that I was writing, the world that I created. Approximately 10 years ago, I wouldn’t have known that I wanted to go into English or journalism as a career path, but I do now. I want to be able to write for a job where I’ll be sharing my ideas and thoughts with the world to help and be there for others, as reading and writing has helped and been there for me.

And I wouldn’t have had it any other way.

No longer running away

BREATHING RAPIDLY, TEARS streamed down my face. “I can’t do this anymore,” I say to myself.

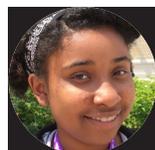
Standing up, I walk to a random person sitting in the park.

“Can I please use your phone to call my mom?” I ask.

She looks away from her phone for a split-second, then back at it and says yes. “Thank you,” I reply.

She nods, handing me her phone. I call my mom, she answers and tells me to walk back to my friend’s house because she’s waiting for me in front of her house.

When I arrive I see her crying. I climb into the car with my mom. I don’t communicate with



Mariah Watley
Sage Academy

her for the car ride. She sits me down at a restaurant and tells me, “Mariah, you need to stop following people. It may seem fun now, but watch when you’re on your own.”

I don’t make eye contact. “These friends of yours will lead you right back to the homeless shelter.”

With those words, it clicked. I needed to make a change, this time the right one.

As a child I lived in a homeless shelter called Mary’s Place. Being a child, I didn’t really know that it was a bad situation—until school began and I had to be picked up by the bus in front of a homeless shelter. These 9-year-old kids were telling me I was poor, stupid and dirty. This really brought my confidence to rock bottom.

Finally, in the fifth grade, after being able to leave the homeless shelter and change schools, I thought I could finally start over. But, when I finally got this new start, I was hesitant to talk to people. I feared it would be elementary school all over again. Having to go to school and hear the same thing every day, and letting people push me around because I was afraid to say something, was agonizing for a 12-year-old to go through.

In eighth grade, I decided to make a drastic change, and this change wasn’t so favorable. I made friends who wanted to fight all the time and lived for drama. Since they did, I felt I had to, too.

That summer I decided it would be cool to run away from home, since my parents obviously didn’t care about me because they didn’t like the people I called friends.

While my parents were gone, I crowded my bag with clothes and took the city bus to my friend’s house. She wasn’t there, but her siblings were. So I sat in their living room until I heard a loud knock on the door. It was my dad, looking for me.

My friend’s siblings lied to my dad and said I wasn’t there while I snuck out the back door. After they talked to my dad, they came

out and told me I had to walk to their aunt’s house. I went to Jordan Park instead, and sat on the slide with all these questions running in my head: “Why am I running away?” “Will I stay in the park all night?” “I really wish I just stayed home.”

After the talk with my mom, I began doing things completely different. Now, I make short horror and anti-bullying films. I wrote horror and mystery stories. I made some tremendous friends. We want to do well in school, graduate, perhaps even go to the same college.

Everything is going so well in my life. Who knew one word like “homeless” could make your life so much better?

I have become very optimistic. I believe that when I want something, if I work hard enough I can get it.

AVID from page 20

Slowly, I looked up at my tall, smiling teacher and followed her into a room full of my new classmates. I could feel all eyes on me. I was the shortest, smallest and loneliest of all. It felt like I had dropped down into a world where I didn’t belong.

Over time, I learned a lot more about the culture. I knew how to ask for help and began to understand the reasons why my mother left everything and moved to America. I used to go to her and say, “I don’t like school because I don’t have any friends.” She would reassure

me and say, “Remember, you don’t need friends to go to school, and we moved here because we want you to be educated.”

My mom’s support and hard work motivate me to value my opportunities. I attend school every day. I’m never late for my classes. I stay

organized so there aren’t missing or late assignments. I’m grateful and ready to be the first in my family to attend a university.

Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” I am driven by the

sacrifices my mom made so that I can achieve my dreams. People can take away our land, our rights, but they can never take away our knowledge.

I work hard because one day I want to check the “College degree” box for my own education and prove that I can overcome challenges and thrive.

ThreeSixty Focus on...

Gov. Mark Dayton

The Minnesota governor talks about his high school life, his political career and the state's diversity and inclusion efforts.

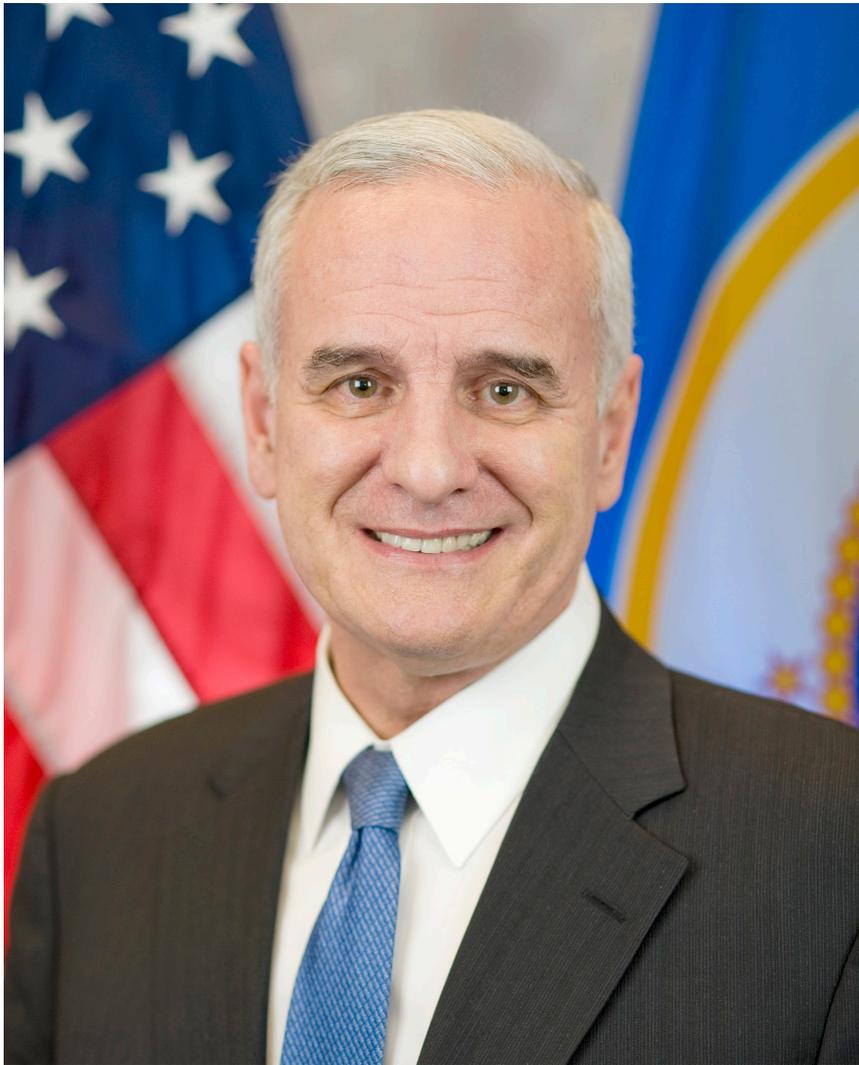


PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF GOV. MARK DAYTON

Gov. Mark Dayton, Minnesota's 40th governor.

IN JUNE 1968, then-college student Mark Dayton was up late in his parents' basement, watching the California presidential primary election on TV.

He watched as Sen. Robert Kennedy was shot at a Los Angeles hotel, not long after winning the primary for the Democratic nomination. Kennedy died the next day.

"There's something about my political hero dying for the causes that he believed in that just lit a spark inside me," said Dayton, the great-grandson of the founder of the Dayton's department store company, which



Samantha HoangLong
ThreeSixty
Journalism intern

later became Target. "And I couldn't be comfortable being comfortable in my parents' comfortable home anymore."

Dayton, who grew up in Long Lake, Minnesota, had just finished his junior year at Yale University as a pre-med student. But after this moment, he withdrew his

medical school applications and became politically active, he said, especially with Vietnam war protests and anti-war efforts.

He graduated and taught general science to diverse ninth-graders at a public school on the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City. He began to discover the injustices some students face due to their circumstances, he said. He wanted to help change that and improve the lives of others.

Dayton, 70, is now the 40th governor of Minnesota. Previously, he has served as U.S. Senator, Minnesota State Auditor and Commissioner of the Minnesota Departments of Economic Development and of Energy and Economic Development.

In January 2015, Dayton established the Diversity and Inclusion Council to improve the recruitment and retention of state employees from diverse backgrounds, among other things. He also hired Minnesota's first chief inclusion officer, James Burroughs, in 2016.

Dayton is on his second and, he says, final term as Minnesota's governor. He took office in January 2011. He is the oldest governor to be elected in Minnesota and will end his second term in early 2019, just before his 72nd birthday.

I sat down with Gov. Dayton, five days after a jury acquitted St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez in the shooting death of Philando Castile, to talk about Dayton's childhood in Minnesota, his political career, Castile and Dayton's diversity and inclusion efforts.

Q: What was it like growing up in the Dayton Family?

Dayton: I grew up in a relatively cloistered environment. Lived out in the country and I went to a private school, so I had a good upbringing. I played ice hockey, my passion. My childhood dream was to be the starting goalie on the U.S. Olympic Hockey team, which I didn't manage to realize.

But it didn't show me the world. It didn't even show me Minnesota, so it was what it was. Not nearly as broad [of a] gaze as the learning environment that you and others are in now.

Q: What do you think are the main things you missed out on?

D: The diversity. I mean, seeing people with all different backgrounds. Going to

an all-male school, [missing] that co-education. And just a sense of a broader connection to community. I went to Blake School. Now, they have a lot of community engagement programs so the focus of the school has really changed. But back when I graduated in 1965, it was went [to school], went to classes, went to the ice rink and home.

Q: What was your high school experience at Blake like?

D: We had an excellent hockey team. Back then, it was the separate tournament for private and parochial schools, so we won that tournament. And that was sort of my life. I was student council president. I had a pretty successful career there and made the honor roll. I had a good educational experience there and good preparation, but again, not the kind of broadening life experience that I think most students your age have now, which would be a lot better.

And I worked three summers [as an] orderly in surgery at Minneapolis hospital, which got me interested. I was pre-med in college until I withdrew all my applications my senior year. But that was a really meaningful experience too—to see the intricacies of surgery and to see people saving people's lives.

Q: I read that you graduated from Yale with a degree in psychology, and then taught in public schools in New York City. But for most of your life, you were in private schooling. So how did that happen?

D: I said pre-med in college, but then by my second half of my junior year, this was 1968, I really started getting politicized in opposition of the war in Vietnam and the presidential contest.

My first political hero was Robert Kennedy. And I came home from my junior year in college and sat down in my parents' basement to watch the California primary returns in 1968. My parents didn't like the Kennedys, so they went to bed and I was down there all by myself.

Bobby Kennedy won the primary, and I watched him give his victory speech, and they said, "Now it's on to Chicago." I was reaching forward to turn off the TV, and suddenly there he was lying in a pool of blood, right in front of me. And I watched that over and over that night and the next couple of days, repeat.

There's something about my political hero dying for the causes that he believed



PHOTO COURTESY OF OFFICE OF GOV. MARK DAYTON

Gov. Dayton speaks with young people. Dayton says young people planning for their future should “follow your interests. Follow what grabs you.”

in that just lit a spark inside me. And I couldn't be comfortable being comfortable in my parents' comfortable home anymore.

So I withdrew all my applications from medical school, because I wasn't ready to make that kind of career-decision commitment and got involved in the anti-war movement, in college my senior year and thereafter. I ended up with the distinction of being the only Minnesotan on President Nixon's enemies list.

... I got very politically active and then decided I wanted to get some real-world experience. And I had a friend who was part of this teaching organization. It was kind of a forerunner to Teach For America, in terms of putting people like myself in urban public schools. I was down on the Lower East Side of New York City. My students taught me much more than I taught them. It was a very broadening, eye-opening and searing experience to realize the injustice of kids who were, through no choice of their own, born in such very different circumstances from how I grew up.

Q: So you had to face that challenge. What other challenges have you faced as governor?

D: Being governor is facing daily challenges. That's what the job entails. It varies from the legislative sessions, [which] of course

are focused on the Legislature. I've had seven legislative sessions, and three of them were with Republican majorities in both the House and Senate. Two years were with DFL majorities and one year was with Republican House and Democratic Senate. So I've [had] all those combinations. They're all challenging because legislators are elected in their own right, and they have their own points of view, and rightfully so.

And especially with Republicans in this last session, as you know, right now I zeroed out the funding for the Minnesota House and Senate because I disagreed with some of the things that they sort of rammed through at the last minute, and so they're suing me. Those relationships continue to be challenging.

[There are challenges with] incidents like Philando Castile's [shooting death]. It was just devastating so many people both last year when it occurred and then now with the verdict.

And then I'm going up Friday to the Iron Range where this longtime journalist up there, the editor of the paper, had a major heart attack and a heart transplant. I'm going up for a benefit for him and probably the last time I'll see him.

There's just very, very human experiences—going to funerals, of not fortunately so many now, but going to funerals of soldiers who lost their lives in Afghanistan and Iraq,

THE MARK DAYTON FILE

- **Profession:** Democratic Minnesota Governor
- **Age:** 70
- **Hometown:** Long Lake, MN
- **Career snapshot:** Became politically active by protesting the Vietnam War in the 1960s; served as Minnesota State Auditor for five years; elected as U.S. Senator from Minnesota from 2001-2007; became 40th Governor of Minnesota in 2011 at the age of 63
- **Find him:** On Twitter at @GovMarkDayton

law enforcement officers who lost their lives, and other community people who have lost their lives. Being present, which is very important to them, but is very, very difficult, very painful. You try to console spouses and often young children.

But it's a job that puts me in daily contact with the real world, which is just important. I say, “Everybody needs a good reason to get out of bed in the morning,” and I always have several good reasons to get up and be involved.

Q: You've made efforts to improve diversity and inclusion in the state's workforce. Why do you think this is important?

D: When I grew up in Minnesota, diversity training was teaching the Germans to get along with the Scandinavians. It was basically all white. We had a Native American population but they were not people I encountered every day, and nor did most. ...

Now, Minnesota reflects the world, so we have a lot of catching up to do with that diversification of our population and our helping professions of teaching, of social services. ... It's been catching up for Minnesota to have our helping professions and the people in them more accurately reflect diversity, in schools and alike.

We've really emphasized that in my judicial appointments ... but really emphasized appointing people of color. [We have appointed] two [people of color] of the seven in the Minnesota Supreme Court, including the first Native American Supreme Court jurist anywhere in the country. Those are very, very well-qualified people.

In district court, people say, when somebody walks into a courtroom, they look around [and say], “Is there anybody that looks like me?” And if you're a minority and everybody else there is white, right away you're thinking, “I'm not gonna get a fair shake here.”

In some ways, state government was predominantly a white population and dedicated people. But Jaime Tincher (Gov. Dayton's chief of staff, who started in January 2014) ... really took hold of this and said we want the workforce in the state of Minnesota to look like Minnesota. She brought in James Burroughs, who's our chief inclusion officer—I guess the first inclusion officer of any state in the country. And James has really spearheaded the reaching out.

We didn't know how to recruit men and women of color. We didn't have those relationships, connections, and James has been crucial to establishing those connections and find ways to have it be known that we ... want young people like yourself to consider state government as at least an experience, if not a career. We've made some significant

strides. We still have a long ways to go, and also with people with disabilities, but Jaime and James have made a tremendous difference.

Q: Do events such as the Philando Castile shooting and trial tie into your diversity and inclusion efforts, and if so how?

D: Yesterday we had about 40 of our staff and interns who were gathered to process this. And I looked around the room and [about a fourth were] men and women of color. My first year as governor would have been probably 5 percent. Again, Jaime, chief of staff, really deserves credit. She has really reached out. We have a Native American woman now who's on our staff. We have Latino. We have Hmong. We have a woman whose family is Mongolian. A whole range of diversity, and again, really extraordinary, talented people. But it makes such a big difference to be sharing that experience with a group of people who reflect Minnesota.

It's a very challenging issue for Minnesotans, especially people like myself, who grew up without that kind of contact. ... Even Minnesotans over the age of 50, or even maybe over 40, most grew up in predominantly white enclaves and schools. To really be able to talk, and more importantly, to listen to people with different life experiences and who suffered the kind of rant discrimination that was evident when Mr. Castile got pulled over because of the way he looked, things that we just in Minnesota still need to work a lot on how we can communicate with one another, listen to one another, understand one another and then move forward.

It has been a priority and it's going to be an even more major priority in the next few weeks or months because I think it's such a critical time for Minnesota. Everybody says, “How do we move forward? Where do we go from here?” And that's what I want to try to find out.

Q: What advice would you give to teens as they prepare for college or their next steps in life, and beyond?
GOV. DAYTON *continued on page 24*

Student seeks new opportunity at Dougherty Family College

St. Thomas two-year school offers low-income students a chance at college

KELLY ORDONEZ SAYBE didn't get into her first college choice, the University of St. Thomas.

Saybe, 18, had other college options, but worried about how she would pay the soaring cost of tuition. Then she got accepted into the Dougherty Family College, St. Thomas' new two-year school for low-income students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college.

"I knew that I needed to find something that was going to be the right fit," said Saybe, a 2017 Roseville Area High School graduate. For her, that happened to be the Dougherty Family College, which is welcoming its first class this fall.

Although it is a two-year program, Dougherty students will get a college experience similar to St. Thomas, but for far less money, said Doug Thompson, associate dean of students at Dougherty.

"I think the resources and the



Heidi Sanchez Avila
Hiawatha Collegiate High School



Safiya Mohamed
St. Paul Central High School

support that our students will receive at the DFC will separate them from other community college students," Thompson said.

The Dougherty school could offer huge savings over other colleges. Tuition and fees are expected to be \$15,000 per year, but school officials say tuition could be as low as \$1,000 per year, after grants and financial aid, for the neediest students.

By comparison, tuition alone at St. Thomas is more than \$40,000 per year.



SAFIYA MOHAMED/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Kelly Ordonez Saybe, a Roseville Area High School graduate and ThreeSixty Journalism alum, says the Dougherty Family College is "giving me another chance."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Dougherty Family College, go online to www.stthomas.edu/dfc.

St. Thomas drew inspiration for the two-year school from Arrupe College, a similar program at Loyola University in Chicago. Dougherty students will earn a two-year associate's degree that they can use to

transfer into a four-year university, including St. Thomas.

Dougherty offers many initiatives to help students transition from high school to college. Students will receive free breakfast and lunch and free bus passes to get to campus, located at St. Thomas' downtown Minneapolis campus. The college will supply students with laptops that they keep after graduation.

The college will offer introductory liberal arts classes designed to help students transfer to a four-year school.

Students also will receive paid internships at some of the area's largest companies. Students will be in school four days per week and then work at their internship one day per week, Thompson said.

"The whole experience at Dougherty is going to be unique because ... we're really exposing them to so many opportunities in addition to classroom opportunities," Thompson said.

The incoming class is expected to be about 75 students, Thompson said in July. College leaders expect that once the school is fully up and running, it will have no more than 300 students per year.

ANOTHER CHANCE

When Saybe was 5 years old, her family moved from Honduras to the U.S. In first grade, she took classes for students who weren't fluent in English.

Since seventh grade, Saybe has been active in a college readiness program, even graduating from the program with honors. Ever since, she says, the belief that she must attend college has become deeply ingrained, even though no one in her family has gone to college.

Saybe said she hopes to study English and become a teacher.

"I really wanted to attend St. Thomas," she said, "so I felt the Dougherty Family College was giving me another chance to be a St. Thomas student and to continue on."

GOV. DAYTON from page 23

D: Follow your interests. Follow what grabs you.

I have a lot of young people come from high school, or even college, [saying] "I want to be President of the United States or a U.S. Senator, so what's the roadmap?" It used to be, well, you went to law school and you got a degree. Now, Donald Trump shows any career path can lead you to higher office. So I would just encourage people to get real-world experience, I mean after academics. Complete your education because having a higher education degree of either college or even post-college is going to be crucial to your opportunities in life.

But beyond that, then whatever interests

you, go get the experience. ... I had no thought when I was graduating college that I was going to run for office. I considered myself an anti-war activist. I wasn't a part of the Democratic Party. Back then, it was the War Party under Lyndon Johnson and then Richard Nixon, so it never occurred to me, literally, never occurred to me to run for office until I started working for [former senator and U.S. Vice President Walter] Mondale and sort of said, "Okay, government's a place where you can try to impact people's lives on a much broader scale than teaching in a classroom," which is important, but it was better suited for my interests and I think my abilities. But I got there ten years after I graduated from high school, and being in New York City and living with a welfare

family in a public housing project, and living that experience was much more education than any post-graduate program could've been. It was the kind of work I wanted to do.

I just say, first of all, relax and enjoy your youth. Just savor the fact that you're young. You only get that chance once, and don't stress out over as I say this long-term plan and how you're going to achieve it, and every decision is based on ten or 20 years from now. Make your decisions, intelligent decisions, but based on what interests you now, and especially, as I say, get engaged with the world and have a great experience.

Q: Are you sticking to your pledge to not run a third term? If so, what's next?

D: Yes, definitely.

I don't know [what's next]. I haven't had time to give it much thought. A year from now, I'll probably be thinking about it more. But I'll be 72 the month after I leave office. We'll have to see. I've been fortunate in my life where one thing has led to another. So I've always, so far, been blessed to be able to finish one thing and give it my full attention and then have a pause, which I think I'll do, go somewhere for a couple of months.

After I left the Senate, I went skiing for a month. I said I wanted to trim my body and dry-clean my brain. So I'll take a month or two off and decompress and then, as they say, see what's next.

Labor of love

Steger Wilderness Center in Ely home to vibrant community

FOR THOSE WHO know of Minnesota polar explorer Will Steger, they most likely have heard of his ambitious polar expeditions and work on combatting climate change.

Attention may seldom shift to his Wilderness Center and the community he has cultivated there.

Located on about 240 acres of wilderness in Ely, Minnesota, Steger's land includes the beautiful Picketts Lake, a retired sled dog named Jasper, plenty of fresh air, a loving community and, towering above it all, his Wilderness Center.

Even with all of its architectural beauty, the Wilderness Center is a work-in-progress.

"My expeditions have been a means to an end," Steger said. "This is by far the largest project of my life. It's really what my life's been about, this center."

The center has been a lifetime of work for Steger. Buying the land when he was 19, nearly 55 years ago, Steger intended to live self-sufficiently in the wilderness, he said. It wasn't until later, while crossing Antarctica, that Steger's true vision for his land became apparent.

"That's where I had the idea of building a center," he said. "I felt I could do the biggest impact with my life if I could create the center and then work with top-level leadership and policymakers. Working on the top, you affect the whole base below."

Intending to host a variety of programs surrounding topics such as environmental and social issues, Steger expects the center to be completed and functional by 2020, he said.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE WILDERNESS

It's not just Steger who sees the potential for the Wilderness Center. Those living on the land during the summer see it, too.



Maya Shelton-Davies
ThreeSixty alum,
University of
St. Thomas

One of those people is Aurora Wahlstrom, 21, of St. Paul. Wahlstrom has spent about 10 years visiting Steger's property and is one of eight young adults calling the wilderness home for the summer. Wahlstrom, who spends the season working on construction projects and helping build the center, says she's able to form a deeper connection to the legacy.

"I think I keep coming back because my heart is in this place, you know? I just feel like this is my home now, I feel connected to it," Wahlstrom said. "It gives me a sense of purpose to come here, to use my hands, to build things that are hopefully going to serve a greater cause one day."

The Wilderness Center, as well as the numerous other buildings and structures scattered across the area, have been built with the power of volunteers. Throughout the years, an innumerable number of people have dedicated their time to helping complete Steger's legacy, making it a part of their own as well.

"This place wouldn't even be here without the volunteers," said John Ratzloff, 71, Steger's photographer-in-residence and longtime friend. "I heard Will say that there's well over a million hours of volunteer hand labor in the construction of this."

COMBATTING CLIMATE CHANGE

For Steger, those hours of work have helped make his vision a reality, and to him, the completion of his Wilderness Center couldn't come at a more decisive time.

The Larsen C Ice Shelf in Antarctica recently broke off, Steger



MAYA SHELTON-DAVIES/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Construction on polar explorer Will Steger's Steger Wilderness Center in Ely began in 1988, and the building is still being finished. Steger expects the Wilderness Center, which will host a variety of programs on environmental and social issues, will be completed by 2020.



Steger laughs during the daily post-breakfast meeting at the site in Ely.

MAYA SHELTON-DAVIES/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

says. He previously crossed the Larsen A, B and C ice shelves—he crossed Antarctica in 1989 and 1990—and since then, climate change has caused each to break away, he said.

"This [the Wilderness Center] is almost ready to go at a really critical time," he said. "... There's a need to go to the wilderness and bring people together to get inspired and look at the solutions. I almost can't believe the timing."

Steger has been doing environmental advocacy for most of his life, starting nonprofits such as Climate Generation, which works

with individuals to find solutions to climate change. For him, what sets the Wilderness Center apart is its location, which lets the environment speak for itself.

"With the power of the wilderness it's really possible to bring people to a level that you can't reach in a hotel room or some artificial environment," Steger said "... They're also always immersed in the silence of this area, the simplicity of it. We're not going to solve all the world problems in one center like this, but it can certainly have a big impact."

According to the residents,

however, it isn't just the wilderness that makes the center unique.

"The wilderness and Will's spirit—those two together make everything happen," Ratzloff said.

Even for people who haven't spent as much time on the property, it's clear that Steger is a big part of the place.

"I couldn't imagine this place without him," Wahlstrom said. "It's weird when he leaves. I feel like there's a hole here. I feel like he's this cohesive glue that holds this whole operation together."

PERSONAL, COMMUNITY IMPACT

For Ratzloff, the photographer-in-residence, the center is also personally meaningful. He claims that without his time on Will's land leading an active life, he wouldn't be the same person.

"I'm happier here," he said. "... I could be sitting on a couch somewhere watching television until I fall apart, but every year I get stronger up here despite chronological age. I'm keeping the ravages of age postponed."

While visitors may value the property for different reasons, one outstanding commonality that seemed to strike everyone was the unique community created at Steger's homestead.

STEGER *continued on page 29*



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Nancy Cassutt

MPR's Cassutt joins ThreeSixty board

NANCY CASSUTT HAS been elected to the ThreeSixty Advisory Board. Cassutt is executive director, MPR News and programming, and has held several roles during her seven-year tenure at Minnesota Public Radio | American Public Media.

"I'm honored to join the board and all the talented people who work really hard to help make ThreeSixty a thriving, necessary program," Cassutt said. "I look forward to getting to work."

Recently, Cassutt has been a leader in MPR and ThreeSixty's efforts to establish a radio broadcast camp for advanced ThreeSixty students. The camp debuted this summer and was in memory of longtime MPR News employee and champion of ThreeSixty Toni Randolph, who passed away in July 2016.

"We look forward to continuing our work with Nancy and MPR," said ThreeSixty executive director Chad Caruthers. "Our partnership is strong and plays an important role in offering our students unique and relevant opportunities in media."

Cassutt joined MPR after a decade at Internet Broadcasting. She began her career as a reporter at WDIO-TV in Duluth. After working at several Midwest stations, Cassutt ultimately landed in news management, including leading the WCCO-TV news team.

ALUM from page 7

At St. Thomas, Ismail played four years of football, anchored for Campus Scope, the now-defunct campus TV broadcast program, and was president of PULSE, a performance arts organization that promotes diversity.

After he graduated in 2012, he moved to Mason City, Iowa, to work as a multimedia journalist and fill-in anchor at KIMT-TV. For three years, he reported on long-form stories, features, policy changes and court trials.

In fact, some of his reports on court trials caught the attention of national sources such as CNN and USA Today, he said.

In 2013, Ismail received a Midwest Regional Emmy for

reporting on the evacuation of Northwood, Iowa. He also has received several awards from the Iowa Broadcast News Association for his reporting and photography.

Now, Ismail reports on breaking news and crime-related stories for NBC-2 in Fort Myers, where he's worked since March 2016. His beats are different from Iowa, he said, and he is hoping these experiences make him a more well-rounded journalist.

He's also hoping those skills will bring him back home to Minnesota one day.

"My big thing since I left Minnesota was that I was going to come back home at some point and see if I can report in front of my mom," Ismail said. "That's been a dream of mine for a long time."



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEVI ISMAIL

Ismail's first job after graduating from the University of St. Thomas was at KIMT in Mason City, Iowa.

PRODUCE from page 8

Leftover produce is sold to university staff, faculty and students, and those proceeds are given to BrightSide youth.

A portion of the produce grown in St. Thomas' garden during the summer also is sold at farm stands set up in front of corner stores. Corner stores receive 50 percent of the day's sales.

Food deserts, according to the American Nutrition Association, are parts of the country that lack "fresh fruit, vegetables and other healthful whole foods usually found in impoverished areas. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers markets and healthy food providers."

A U.S. Department of Agricultural map depicts portions of north and south Minneapolis as food deserts. According to a 2017 Feeding America report, 11.3 percent of Hennepin County residents were food insecure in 2015. The USDA defines food insecurity as a range from reduced quality and variety of food to going without meals.

BrightSide Produce aims to bridge that gap.

EXPANDING FURTHER

The idea for BrightSide Produce came to Kay in 2013. He was listening to a story on the radio about a program having difficulties getting



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIGHTSIDE PRODUCE

Pruitt (right) and a young man sell fresh produce.

fruits and vegetables to corner stores. Kay, a biology professor at St. Thomas, was conducting a research project in one of the greenhouses.

"[I realized] we were growing all these vegetables in this greenhouse," he said. "So why don't we just get these vegetables into the program?"

When Kay was introduced to

two young, budding entrepreneurs from north Minneapolis, Pruitt and Demetria Fuller, who wanted to make a difference in the community, they spent three to four months brainstorming. Eventually it led to the establishment of BrightSide Produce.

Initially, corner store owners

were resistant to get involved with BrightSide. Herrli, the business manager, said BrightSide had to prove that it wasn't trying to cut into corner store owners' profits. That meant staying persistent until finally, one corner store owner agreed to buy BrightSide's products, starting a chain reaction. Today, it supplies more than 20 corner stores, and the shop owners are grateful for deliveries, Herrli said.

"Just seeing the way people light up when we are out there is amazing," Herrli said.

Due to its small size, BrightSide Produce doesn't command the lowest prices from wholesale distributors, according to Kay.

However, same-store sales have increased 30 percent from last year, Kay said.

In early June, BrightSide Produce expanded to San Diego. Kay has big plans for BrightSide. He hopes to involve more people, attract a higher demand for fresh produce and expand further into lower-income communities.

"There are [about] 250 stores in Minneapolis," Kay said. "We could provide this exceptional service to all of them and make sure that there are enough fruits and vegetables for all of them. ... That really ends that whole idea of food insecurity when it's available to everybody."

NICE RIDE from page 12

prescribed as a treatment for these conditions, according to Amber Courtney, an occupational therapist at HCMC who specializes in mental health and who helps lead the program.

“Medication alone often isn’t enough to change people’s circumstance or condition,” Courtney said. “It often takes some kind of physical activity to support their medication.”

The program allows participants to have the benefits of the bike, without worrying about the cost of buying or maintaining it, Cho said. In addition, riders are able to explore the numerous sights of the city alone or in group sessions.

During the first year, 26 people participated in the program and rode nearly 1,000 hours combined, said Courtney. So far this year, 25 HCMC patients are participating and 20 percent of last year’s participants decided to come back, with some leading the current group.

Some riders accumulated more than 500



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMBER COURTNEY

Participants in the program and program leaders pose for a photo near a Nice Ride station.

bike rides by themselves and reported losing weight and even getting off some medications during the program, according to Cho.

But what happens when winter comes?

The program hopes to partner with organizations such as the YMCA, Planet Fitness and

hospitals to provide more exercise options for its patients, according to Courtney.

If riders keep up participation for the next few years, the program is expected to expand, according to Courtney. The two partners also are looking to widen the program to include



ERICK CASTELLANOS/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Tina Cho, the access director of Nice Ride Minnesota, said Nice Ride’s goal is to improve the quality of life for all Minnesotans.

people with physical illnesses, such as high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes.

“This is really just the beginning for us,” Courtney said.



Young people from “Grow Food,” a music video about healthy eating that was a product of Appetite for Change’s summer youth program in 2016.

APPETITE from page 12

Breaking Bread Cafe, a restaurant and catering service that serves comfort food and trains youth in culinary arts and food service, according to the organization’s website.

Young people in the organization also lead workshops and grow food as part of a cooperative that sells produce to the cafe, local corner stores, restaurants and others, including tenants of Kindred Kitchen, according to the website.

Youth learn not only how to properly grow and cook produce, but also how to read nutrition labels at the grocery store, according to youth leaders.

“Once they get into the process of reading what they actually put into their bodies, you slowly see them stop or consume [unhealthy food] as little as possible,” Dabbs said.

Appetite for Change teaches its young people life lessons such as personal finance and people skills. It also helps bridge the gap between youth and government by bringing young people to the Capitol, according to Lataijah.

“My community is really important to me, and to see them grow and help them grow is something

“We wanted to make music and use it in a positive way to really get this message out: you could grow your own food.”

—Lataijah Powell, youth leader and program facilitator at Appetite for Change

I’ve always wanted to do,” said Lataijah, who is now a youth leader and program facilitator at Appetite for Change.

Last year, Appetite for Change’s young people helped create a music video, titled “Grow Food,” an idea that initially came from Lataijah and another youth leader years ago, she said. The video, which was released in November 2016, quickly gained traction and became a viral sensation. It had more than 400,000 views as of August.

The first verse of the song goes: “See in my hood, there ain’t really much to eat. Popeye’s on the corner, McDonald’s right across the street.” The verse continues: “All this talk about guns and the drugs, pretty serious. But look at what they feeding y’all, that’s what’s really killin’ us.”

“We wanted to make music and use it in a positive way to really get

this message out: you could grow your own food,” Lataijah said. “You don’t have to go to a grocery store. Plant your seed and watch it grow.

Appetite for Change’s young people are mentored by youth leaders, some of whom used to be in their same position.

Lataijah began working with Appetite for Change as a student in 2012. During high school, she advocated for better food options at her school, Patrick Henry, and eventually began to see changes, she said. During her senior year, the school started to bring in chefs who made “cooked food, not out of a bag,” she said.

“It also helped me get my friends involved, and [I was] teaching them so they could go back and teach their families,” she said. “... Everybody knew about Appetite for Change because that’s all I was talking about.”



ANNE OWER/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Baglien, the garden's coordinator, says the garden explores the intersection of food, faith and climate change.

GARDEN from page 14

continuation of the space created at the meal," Baglien said. "... It's a way to bring people from all different backgrounds together. People need to know other people that are different from them. That's how we eliminate some of the fear."

Two Bulls also says the garden, with its lush green space, rows of tomatoes, squash and other produce ripening on vines and stalks, brings unity.

"What I think is really interesting about the garden itself is that it does bring together all sorts of different people—Christians, Muslims, a cross section of society that has come together for one purpose," he said.

Conversations over food also take place at the Gandhi Mahal restaurant, where the produce from the garden ends up on dinner plates for customers.

The Gandhi Mahal restaurant

opened in 2008. Owner and Executive Chef Ruhel Islam, an immigrant from Bangladesh, aimed to create a source of fresh, sustainably farmed produce for the restaurant. Through a yard-sharing partnership with MNIPL, Islam started a productive garden on a plot near the restaurant in 2012, according to Baglien. First Nations Kitchen joined the partnership in 2016.

Together, the three groups now explore the connection between "food, faith and climate change," Baglien said.

Baglien says the garden's greatest benefit is that it teaches people "what that means to care for something that's growing and caring for life."

"Not just dominating over nature," she said, "but nurturing, realizing that we're really dependent and connected with the Earth."

SALAD from page 14

Minnesota," includes barley, squash, beets, cranberries and fresh mint, among other items. The recipe was created by a team of youth that includes Zarea Mobley, a sophomore at St. Paul Johnson Senior High School.

"It's a salad that is based on things that are grown here in Minnesota ... to show that we can grow vegetables here in Minnesota, even though the state is kind of a colder state," said Mobley.

Entrepreneurial dietitian Sue Moores established Roots for the Home Team in 2012. She was inspired by youth garden programs in the Twin Cities and started the program to change people's perception of healthy food, she said. The program does this by teaching youth how to create and sell salads as a healthy alternative.

A ballpark may seem to be a strange place to find a salad, but not to Moores.

"If I could change people's belief in eating better," Moores said, "that is a win for them as well—kids certainly, and really the community as a whole."

Moores partnered with youth gardening programs, such as Urban

"It's nice to see people happy that there is healthy food at a baseball game."

—Zarea Mobley, youth in Roots for the Home Team

Ventures, Urban Roots, Dream of Wild Health and Appetite for Change, to let youth achieve the mission. In five years, Roots has had about 230 youth and has sold roughly 1,600 salads at local venues, including Target Field and TCF Bank Stadium, according to the program's website.

"Fans are appreciative," Moores said, "and it is so great to see kids' appreciation and how they get recognized for all the hard work that they've done before. They see a lot of wins on a lot of different levels."

Local youth grow 60 percent of the salad ingredients on a fertile foundation provided by gardening programs. They sell Roots for the Home Team their produce, create salad recipes and then get paid to sell their salads at games. On game days, they offer samples to entice people

to try their salads. About 40 percent of Roots' sales comes from sampling, Moores said.

Selling salads at baseball games is a challenge that not all youth can meet, but youth from Roots for the Home Team step out of their comfort zone and become risk-takers, according to Moores.

"You can see just really big eyes when they walk in because the ballpark is immense," Moores said. "You can literally see their wings just expand because they got a whole lot of extra courage and confidence because of what they accomplish over one game."

This year's group is made up of 40 to 50 students. Mobley, who has been part of local gardening program Urban Roots for two years, was invited to join and accepted, thinking about the big picture and how she would be able to help others, she said.

Being able to see customers smile and knowing she is making a difference is one of Mobley's favorite things about participating, she said.

Mobley hopes to continue being part of both Urban Roots and Roots for the Home Team.

"It's nice to see people happy that there is healthy food at a baseball game," she said.



JANET VALDEZ/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Sue Moores, the executive director of Roots for the Home Team, says she started Roots for the Home Team in 2012 to change people's perception about healthy food.

OPEN GARDEN NIGHT

What: Music, poetry, light refreshments and information on MNIPL activities

When: 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the second and fourth Sundays of the month (weather permitting)

Where: Gandhi Mahal Interfaith Garden, 3201 22nd Ave. N, Minneapolis

NEIGHBORS from page 11

log rolling in a pool. About 170 people turned out to paint memorials. People biked throughout the event and some did flamenco art.

Five Open Streets events have been held since June in city areas including Northeast, Franklin, Lake and Minnehaha, and Downtown. Two more are set for Sept. 9 on West Broadway in north Minneapolis and Sept. 24 on Nicollet Avenue in south Minneapolis.

Knauff was one of the first volunteers at Open Streets and continues to be one. A retired graphic designer, she is the volunteer host of Open Streets. Her job is to guide the younger volunteers in their roles and make sure everyone at the event feels safe.

“To me, it’s about giving back to the community,” she said.

Knauff defines Open Streets as an opportunity not only to seek a safer environment but also to bring communities together. Open Streets has allowed Knauff to see different communities and has influenced her to be more active, she said.

She also became “more confident” about “getting on my bike,”



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOB DIXON

People perform yoga in the middle of Lyndale Avenue during an Open Streets event.

she said.

“The first Open Streets, I had a car and I still drove from places,” she said, “and now at my age, 63, I decided to get rid of my car and I ride my bike everywhere.”

Alex Tsatsoulis, development and communications director at Our Streets Minneapolis, says the event is “meant to give people an opportunity to think of our streets in a different way, how our streets can be designed differently, how we can create a sense of community, and how we can help people, versus just streets that move cars quickly.”

Tsatsoulis, 34, says he has experienced many benefits from Open Streets, including “seeing many different people from all backgrounds

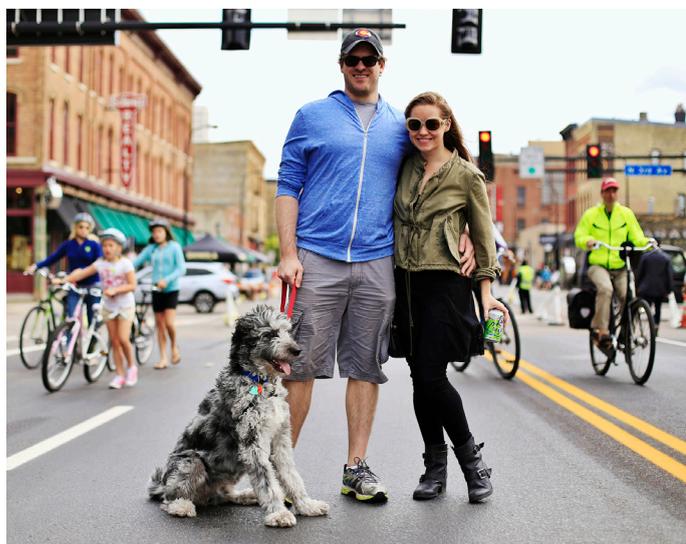


PHOTO COURTESY OF AJITH GEORGE

A couple poses for a photo during an Open Streets event in Minneapolis.

STEGER from page 25

Steger says this community stems from the power of the wilderness.

“The community and the people are really where it’s at, and that’s a reflection of what’s happening here,” Steger said. “I would hope that people would see something really positive and respectful. Everyone feels comfortable here. It’s kind of like a retreat, in a way, it’s a wilderness. It’s a wilderness and it’s a wilderness community.”

For Wahlstrom, the community at the homestead stands apart from the rest of society.

“When you’re out here, I just feel like there [are] no stigmas, there [are] no limitations and you can just be really authentically yourself,” she said. “That’s not judged the same way as it would be elsewhere. If I want to be the foreman of my crew and I’m a woman, that seems normal here.”

For others, such as Ratzloff, the community is formed through the dedication

VIDEO OF THE STEGER WILDERNESS CENTER

To view a video piece about the Steger Wilderness Center, shot and edited by 2014 ThreeSixty Scholar Deborah Honore, go to <http://threesixtyjournalism.org/steger-vid>.

to Steger’s legacy: the completion of the Wilderness Center.

“Here, we work in the field together and we work really hard,” Ratzloff said. “That bonds people. There’s such dignity in labor. Especially when you’re working on something that is going to be a legacy of your own and Will’s.”

Right: Aurora Wahlstrom, 21, of St. Paul, lays stone outside of the Wilderness Center. Wahlstrom has volunteered on Steger’s land for about a decade.



MAYA SHELTON-DAVIES/THREESIXTY JOURNALISM

Open Streets events are “meant to give people an opportunity to think of our streets in a different way.”

—Alex Tsatsoulis, development and communications director at Our Streets Minneapolis

and walks of life exploring.”

He believes that health equity plays a major role in Open Streets events by offering people information about other forms of everyday transportation, free health services and different types of physical activities to try.

Knauff gains hope from her involvement in Open Streets that “we can do this together on a national level,” she said.

“When you read the news, it’s kind of depressing,” she said. “When you know that there is a lot of good people who live next to you, there still is hope because there is a lot of good people out there.”

Onward & upward

A look at ThreeSixty alumni highlights

FROM EARNING NATIONAL journalism awards and scholarships to getting hired to conduct research for the country's largest television sports network, our ThreeSixty Journalism young alumni are starting to make their mark in the media world.

After Gino Terrell coached small groups of ThreeSixty summer camp students on how to craft their college essays, he headed for the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) convention in New Orleans in early August, where he received its 2017 Student Journalist of the Year award. The award is presented to a college student who has excelled within the field of journalism.

Terrell graduated in May 2016 from Hamline University, where he launched a student magazine, Pipers In-Depth. He now works for the Minnesota Twins Rally Team.

"Starting a campus magazine that



Bao Vang
ThreeSixty
Journalism
Engagement
Coordinator

truly reflected diversity on campus was a passion project of mine," Terrell said in a press release, "and to be honored with the most prestigious honor in my journalism career from the National Association of Black Journalists is very humbling."

In a press release, NABJ President Sarah Glover said, "NABJ is proud to recognize Gino Terrell as an exemplary student journalist as he showed commitment to the craft by personally funding a much-needed student news publication.

"Gino forged a path for students to have a journalistic voice on his campus when there was none. It's noteworthy that although a young man, Gino joins professional NABJ

members across the nation working for press freedom and journalistic rights. NABJ is pleased that Gino has taken a stand at such a young age. He's a role model for other students."

Also this summer, Minneapolis Washburn High School 2017 graduate Julia Larson landed a gig working for ESPN during the Minneapolis X Games July 13-16 at U.S. Bank Stadium. She says she was part of the research team, which is primarily responsible for creating athlete bios.

"I would not be the person I am today [without ThreeSixty]," Larson said. "It made me so much more confident in my future and my abilities."

Larson is studying journalism in Brazil for the 2017-18 school year and will be attending New York University starting in fall 2018.

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

Many other young alum also have used the skills they gained in ThreeSixty Journalism to advance their passion for media and communication this summer.

Siemon Lancaster (St. Thomas '17) was hired as

a full-time production assistant at PBS NewsHour's Under-Told Stories Project.

Samantha HoangLong (St. Thomas) received an internship at ThreeSixty Journalism and St. Thomas' TommieMedia through the Minnesota Newspaper Association and Pohlad Family Foundation.

Selam Berhea (George Washington University) interned as a reporter at the Pioneer Press.

Kayla Song (University of Minnesota) received an AAJA summer internship to work at the Pioneer Press.

Danielle Wong (St. Thomas) received an AAJA summer internship to work at Minnesota Public Radio.

Erianna Jiles (St. Paul College) received a scholarship to attend the NABJ Convention.

OFF TO COLLEGE

In a recent survey of ThreeSixty's 15 active high school seniors in the 2016-17 school year News Team, all indicated they will be attending a college or university during the 2017-18 school year. More than half intend to study

communication and journalism, with the majority interested in radio or television. Here are the students and their schools:

Baheer Hussein, Loyola University, Chicago

Amari Graham, University of Minnesota Duluth

Duniyo Awad, Augsburg College
Kelly Ordonez Saybe, Dougherty Family College at St. Thomas

Mina Yuan, Stanford University
Samantha HoangLong, St. Thomas

Julia Larson, PUC Minas and New York University

Tyler Lee, Gustavus Adolphus College

Aidan Berg, University of Southern California

Skyler Kuczaboski, Dartmouth College

Gisell Castaneda, Dougherty Family College at St. Thomas

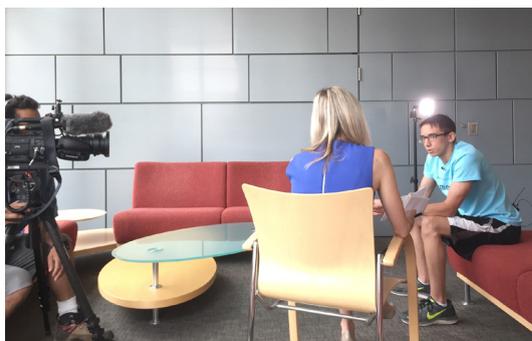
Dominic Hebel-Barreto, Hamline University

Stephanie Ramon Perez, University of Minnesota Twin Cities

Genesis Buckhalton, Drake University

Melisa Robles Olivar, Minneapolis Community and Technical College

Summer photos





2017 PROGRAM YEAR REPORT CARD

THREESIXTY JOURNALISM • JUNE 1, 2016-MAY 31, 2017

Student Demographics	
African	20%
African-American	13%
Asian/SE Asian	32%
Caucasian/White	9%
Hispanic/Chicano/Latino	18%
Middle Eastern	2%
Multiracial	6%

ThreeSixty alum reported internships at:	
• Pioneer Press	• Twin Cities Black Film Festival
• Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal	• ThreeSixty through Minnesota Newspaper Association/Pohlad Family Foundation
• Round Earth Media	• The Current
• KMOJ Radio	• TommieMedia
• Prodeo Academy	

What People Are Saying About ThreeSixty

"My favorite part of ThreeSixty summer camps so far has been the connections I've been able to build with professional journalists, going into their environments, observing their daily lives ... and getting an idea of what it's like to be a professional journalist."

- Zekriah, Student

"I've really enjoyed working with the next generation of journalists. It helps me stay on my game as well."

- Marcheta Fornoff, Volunteer

"Every day I looked forward to coming into camp. The essay concepts you shared with us were very useful and I know I will be able to use those skills and apply them to other things in my life."

- Prosperity, Student

"ThreeSixty is one of the best things that happens in all of Minnesota."

- Britta Greene, Volunteer

180 participants across journalism summer camps, school-year News Team, Youth Digital Media Summit and College Essay Boot Camps

\$185,000+ in ThreeSixty program scholarships provided to financially qualified students

266 volunteer shifts fulfilled by individuals from 72 organizations

82 student bylines published across three issues of ThreeSixty Magazine

18 student bylines published in the Star Tribune and Pioneer Press

39 reported stories written by students

81 college essays written by students

3 student-led breakout sessions created for Youth Digital Media Summit

- How Brands Connect with Audiences Using Instagram and Snapchat
- The World is Watching: The Art of Viral Videos
- Emerging Technology: Telling a Story Through Different Lenses

7 Minnesota Newspaper Association College Better Newspaper Contest Awards earned by ThreeSixty students

1 ThreeSixty student accepted into prestigious Asian American Journalists Association's 2017 JCamp in Philadelphia

ThreeSixty Journalism





SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS

Attend The Great Minnesota Media Get-Together, a fundraiser for ThreeSixty Journalism.

ThreeSixty brings diverse Minnesota high school voices into journalism.

Mix and mingle with media and other professionals while you enjoy a reception, short program and live auction.

Friday, Oct. 27, 2017, 6-8:30 p.m.

University of St. Thomas
Anderson Student Center, St. Paul campus



**Hosted by
Reg Chapman
WCCO-TV**

College of Arts and Sciences | UNIVERSITY OF St. Thomas

**For tickets and more information, visit
stthomas.edu/ThreeSixty2017**

